

A place for me

There is a special place in life
That needs my humble skill,
A certain job I'm meant to do,
Nobody else can fill.

The hours are demanding,
And the pay is not good
And yet I wouldn't change it
For a moment if I could.

There is a special place in life
A goal I must attain,
A dream that I must follow,
For I won't be back again.

There is a mark that I must leave
However small it be,
A legacy of love for those
Who follow after me.

There is a special place in life,
That only I may share,
A little path that bears my name
Awaiting me somewhere.

There is a hand that I must hold
A word that I must say
A smile that I must give, for there
Are tears to blot away.

There is a special place in life
That I was meant to fill,
A sunny spot where flowers grow
Upon a windy hill.

There's always a tomorrow
And the best is yet to be,
And somewhere in the world I know
There is a place for me.

—Mrs. Emmie Ivy
Oxford

Monthly gifts exceed \$12 million first time

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Monthly contributions to the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program exceeded \$12 million for the first time this January, announced Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee.

The Cooperative Program received \$12,772,933 in January, Bennett said. That amount is almost \$2 million—or 18.3 percent—more than the offering for the same month last year. That month previously was the second highest Cooperative Program month in history.

The Cooperative Program is Southern Baptists' unified system of financing SBC mission, education and ministry programs worldwide. The program's funds are sent by local churches to state Baptist conventions.

The state conventions retain a portion of the funds for their own ministries and pass along a portion to the Executive Committee, which disburses the funds to about 20 agencies and institutions.

The \$12.77 million figure is the amount sent to the Executive Committee.

For the first four months of fiscal 1985-86, Cooperative Program receipts are up 8 percent over the same period in 1984-85, Bennett noted. The four-month total is \$41,864,163, compared to \$38,761,536.

That 8 percent increase surpassed the current U.S. inflation rate of 3.8 percent.

The previous single-month high was \$10,991,903, set in August of 1985.

Family sues association, church, two conventions

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP) — The Tar River Baptist Association, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the Southern Baptist Convention have been named as defendants in a \$5.75 million lawsuit filed Jan. 29 in Wake Forest (N.C.) Superior Court.

The defendants have 30 days to respond formally to the suit.

The complaint is being brought by Dana Renee Williams, a minor, by and through her parents, Ellerbee H. and

Denise C. Williams, also listed as plaintiffs.

The plaintiffs allege Dana Renee Williams was injured in a June 20, 1985, accident involving a log truck and an automobile in which she was riding. The automobile was en route to a Girls in Action camp sponsored by Tar River Association. The camp was being held at Chowan College in Murfreesboro, N.C.

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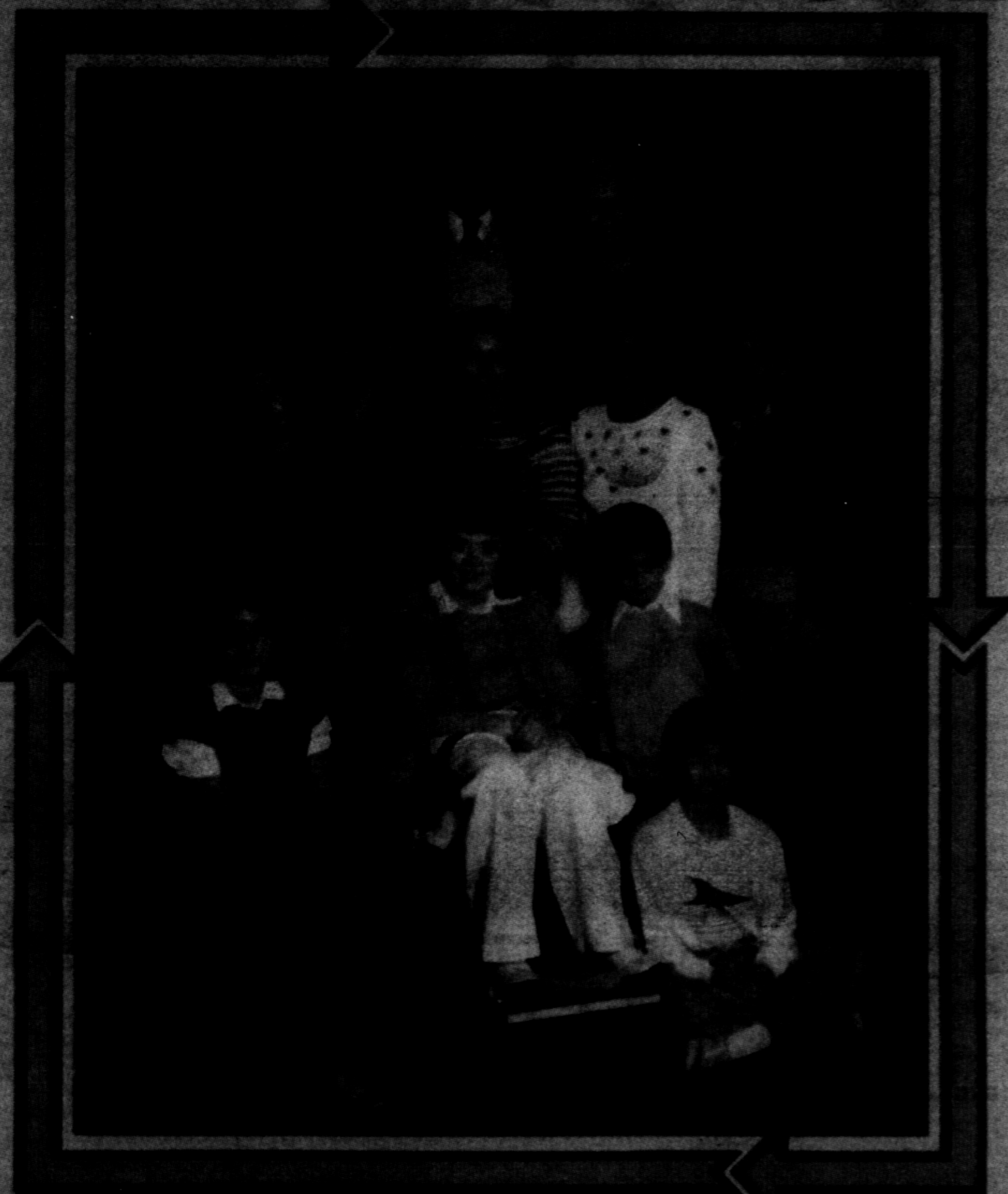
Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, February 27, 1986

Published Since 1877

HOW • FAR • LOVE



R•E•A•C•H•E•S

Week of Prayer for Home Missions 1986

March 2-9, 1986 • Annie Armstrong Easter Offering

National Goal: \$33,500,000

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

Lottery may not be dead

We had hoped that we were through with the threat of having to vote on a state-sponsored lottery for this year, but there are rumblings in the Legislature that there will be an attempt to revive the dead bill, SCR 520.

It will take a two-thirds vote to revive the issue on the floor of the Senate, where it supposedly died two weeks ago because of a failure to lift it off the table. Then it will take a two-thirds vote to pass it.

As long as there is a threat that a lottery bill might come to a vote before the Senate, those who understand the insidious nature of a lottery cannot afford to be complacent.

There are a number of problems that come built in with a lottery.

First, a lottery preys on those who can least afford to part with the money that they use to buy the tickets. In his book, *Gambling: A Deadly Game*, Larry Braidfoot, general counsel for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, notes that a study was made of the placement of lottery outlets in New Castle County in Delaware. He said that no lottery outlets were found in the upper income neighborhoods, where 17,630 persons lived. There was one lottery outlet for every 17,774 persons in the upper-middle income neighborhoods. In the lower-middle to middle income neighborhoods where was one lottery outlet for every 5,032 persons. In the poorest neighborhoods there was one lottery outlet for every 1,981 persons.

This indicates that those who operate lotteries know who is most likely to patronize them. That means that lottery is a regressive tax because it draws the largest percent

of its income from the poorer citizens. It is regressive also because those poorer citizens spend a greater percentage of their income on the lottery.

Second, for those who are interested in such things, the odds against winning a lottery pay-off are awful. Of course, there would be better chances in Mississippi because the population is less than in New York, for instance; but also the pay-off would be much less. In New York the jackpot reached \$22.1 million, but the odds were 3.5 million to one. In Ohio the jackpot reached \$27 million, but the odds on winning were nine million to one. In Massachusetts, Braidfoot notes, the odds were much better. There they were 1.9 million to one, but the jackpot also was much less — \$13 million.

Third, a lottery is a very expensive way to raise money for anything. Braidfoot points out that in Massachusetts it took a total of \$22.4 million in bets to produce a jackpot of \$13 million. The operators, of course, always got their share, which in the case of Massachusetts was \$3.14 million.

Of the \$50 million that citizens of New York coughed up, the state got \$20.5 million. Of the \$53 million donated to the cause by the citizens of Ohio, the state got \$19.6 million. Always the operators got their take out of the income. And fourth, across the board, the betters have got to lose because most of the money goes to other causes. And the state gets less than half of what the citizens provide.

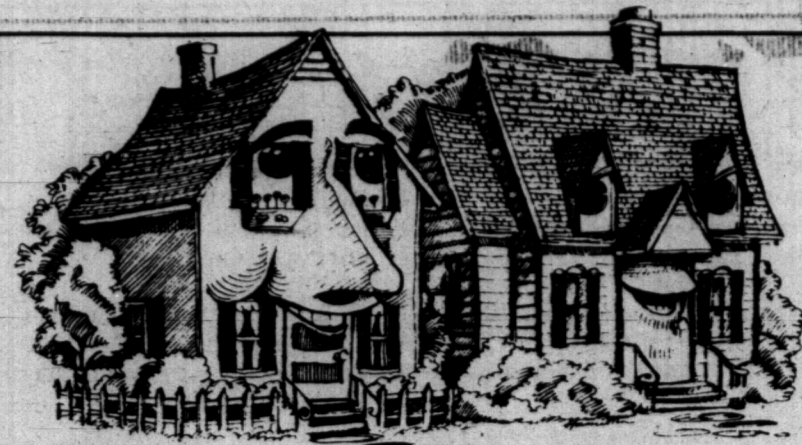
The claim that has been presented

with the promotion of the lottery is that it would bring in \$50 million in tax revenue the first year and would triple in revenues the next three years. The experiences of those states that have initiated a lottery, however, do not seem to bear out statistics such as that. It seems to be more likely that it would be three or four years before any profit would be made and thus any taxes payable. We can be assured that the operators of any lottery establishments would seek to keep their reported profits as low as possible to avoid paying taxes unnecessarily.

Lotteries are promoted by the companies that manufacture lottery tickets and equipment. And they are the entities that make the money off of lotteries. The state would make a little eventually. And somebody would win big every now and then. Across the board, however, the lottery would be a losing proposition for those who gambled on it because it has to be. The establishment has to be paid, and whatever taxes are due have to be paid. Thus it would be cheaper all the way around just to raise taxes and forget the lottery.

The real clincher, however, was the admission that the lottery would not provide any more money for public schools and health care than is available now. It would only free money to be used somewhere else. And since lottery receipts are bound to be irregular, schools and health care actually could suffer.

As one observer close to the scene told the *Baptist Record* recently, some of the finest educational and health care institutions in Mississippi are



Happiness is HOME missions

Support the Week of Prayer for Home Missions by giving to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering

March 2-9, 1986

National Goal: \$33,500,000

Theme: How Far Love Reaches

those provided by religious denominations. They would not receive one penny from lottery operations.

A lottery is something that is not needed in Mississippi, but there will be a renewed effort to make it possible to have one.

We cannot let down our guard. The lottery proponents will be looking for ways to take advantage of the least sign of an opening.

In our issue of Jan. 30 the *Baptist Record* ran a guest editorial detailing the projected experiences of and income from a lottery which is just getting under way in Missouri. The guest editorial used projected figures which painted a bleak picture of what the state could expect. The guest

editorial had first run as an editorial in the *Louisiana Baptist Message* when that state was considering a lottery. The bane of any newspaper is a typographical error, and such an error in this piece seemed to indicate that the editorial was speaking of past experiences. It asked, "So how much income did Missouri realize in its lottery's first year in operation?" The answer was zero, which, no doubt, will be the case. Overhead will eat up the gains. The typographical error was that the sentence should have read, "So how much income will Missouri realize in its lottery's first year of operation?" Louisiana Editor Lynn Clayton is sending his source material to substantiate this situation.

the second greatest commandment. I John 4:7 says, "Beloved, let us love one another: for the love of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God." When we love one another, this is outward proof that we love God. Loving one another as God has loved us can be the greatest "mission" efforts if we'll apply it to our lives.

And finally, Southern Baptists, let us pray for home mission work. This cannot be emphasized enough. Pray for more missionaries. Pray for more mission fields. And be sure to pray for increased commitment in our own lives. The season of prayer for Home Missions and the Annie Armstrong offering are both vital responses to the task at hand.

The Sunday School Board during March 2-9, our week of prayer for home missions, will set up a special toll-free number for us to call in for praying for missions. The number is 1-800-554-PRAY.

So, "How Far Does Love Reach?" Well, if you listen to Jesus he says from Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. I believe our country can be considered "our Jerusalem." Coupled with love and prayer, our goals can be met. As Bill Tanner says concerning Home Missions, "Let our Home Mission efforts go forward in Bold Mission Thrust like a mighty river. Fulfill the Great Commission — let us not fail."

Gary Creech is pastor of Bethesda Church in Union Association.

Guest opinion . . .

How far does love reach?

By Gary Creech

The theme for the 1986 Week of Prayer for Home Missions is, "How Far Love Reaches." Think for a moment. Just how far does love reach?

This is an important question worth considering during this special emphasis of Home Missions. Love should be our primary focus in missions, but so often it is put in a secondary role. With a renewed love of Almighty God and our fellowman in giving our mission monies, love can reach all over our great nation through the Annie Armstrong Home Mission offering.

We have continually emphasized the need for money in our missions, and that need has not been diminished in any way. But without love as our main focus, we might as well hang it up.

The Home Mission Board depends on the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for just about half of its annual income. The other half comes from the Cooperative Program. What better way is there to show your love — than through your giving?

Paul writes in Ephesians that we should be true followers of God, as dear children. Ephesians 5:2 says,

"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor."

Isn't love-offerings what home missions is all about? We know that Christ hath loved us so much that he gave himself for his church. We, as present-day disciples, need to be witnesses of this great light. After all, isn't America the fourth largest unchurched nation in the world? We, as Christians, so often get the attitude that "all the people in our nation are saved individuals." God forbid that we should believe this!

We do have a huge responsibility facing us. It is our Christian duty to "go tell" America about Christ. If we'll love one another and cooperate together by giving our offerings; we can fulfill the Great Commission. Let us now move forward with Bold Mission Thrust in 1986.

And let us pray that God will truly bless our efforts. Our homeward front can produce such a prayer chain — that we can break the bonds of the devil.

All of this and more can be produc-

ed when we give to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. We, Southern Baptists, need to have a renewed commitment to mission work. We have been greatly used by God in past mission efforts, and this can continue to be so in the future.

Love can reach so far, from San Francisco to Rhode Island and from the Great Lakes to the Texas Coastline, and even further. For these reasons, Southern Baptists must take seriously the 1986 Week of Prayer for Home Missions theme, "How Far Love Reaches."

There are three things that I would urge you to consider concerning this matter of love in missions. First, there must be a continuous love for God in our hearts. We must also be willing to share that love with others. The greatest commandment in the Bible tells us that we are to love the Lord God with all our heart, mind, and soul. Let's live today so that other people will see the love of God in our daily lives. Isn't that a form of home missions as well?

Secondly, we must love our neighbor. The Bible speaks of this as

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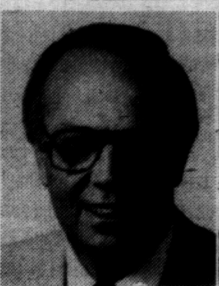
WMU Convention to meet in Jackson



Sorrill



Fancher



Porter



Elliott

"Cornerstones" is the theme for the 1986 annual meeting of Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union. The meeting will be at Broadmoor Baptist Church in Jackson, March 17-18.

The first session will begin on Monday afternoon at 2 p.m. and the meeting will conclude on Tuesday at 3:30.

Out-of state home missionary guests will include Nathan Porter, national domestic hunger consultant, and Michael Elliott, director of the Jefferson Street Baptist Mission in Louisville, Ky.

The Monday afternoon session will

feature state convention president Frank Gunn and Nathan Porter.

Baptist Young Women will gather for their annual banquet on Monday evening at 5:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall at Broadmoor Church.

The Monday night session of the meeting will be highlighted by a message from Elliott and music from the Broadmoor choir.

Three missionary prayer breakfasts will convene at 8:30 on Tuesday morning. Breakfast will be served for a nominal cost and foreign missionaries LaVerne Applewhite, Joyce Davis, and Susie Hartfield will speak

concerning their work.

Tuesday morning's sessions will feature Earl Kelly, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board executive secretary, and Nathan Porter. Parents of missionaries will be recognized and a "state of the union" message will be brought by state WMU executive director Marjean Patterson.

The final session on Tuesday, which begins at 1:30, will feature messages by foreign missionaries Martha Ellen Marler and Nan Sugg and home missionary Mike Elliott.

Special recognition will be given to churches and associations which received "distinguished" recognition on the WMU achievement guide for 1984-85.

Bobbie Sorrill, associate executive director of WMU, SBC, will speak at each session of the meeting. Music will be directed by Linda Johnson, of Nettleton, with Dot Pray, of Jackson, at the organ.

The Monday night session will be interpreted for the deaf.

No child care will be provided for the meeting.



Roger and Mary Bowers



Douglas and Mary Sue Brown



Terry and Kathy Sharp



Thomas Hilyer Karen Brown

FMB appoints 14 with ties to Mississippi

The number of foreign missionaries with Mississippi ties increased substantially with the appointment by the Foreign Mission Board in February of five couples, two singles, and the reappointment of another couple.

Terry and Kathy Sharp were reappointed, this time to South Brazil, where he will be a student worker and she will be a church and home worker. They had been missionaries to Spain for a year and a half when they resigned in 1983 for medical reasons. Since then, he has been minister of youth education at First Church, McComb.

Sharp is a graduate of Cumberland College and earned the master of religious education degree from New Orleans Seminary. Mrs. Sharp, the former Kathy Chapman of Louisville, Ky., attended Cumberland College and William Carey College. She is a Spanish teacher at Parklane Academy, McComb.

The Sharps have one child, Rebekah Danielle, born in 1979.

Karen J. Brown was appointed to Colombia where she will be a nurse. She attends Southwestern Seminary, Ft. Worth. More recently she was a critical care clinician at North Mississippi Medical Center, Tupelo. She is a member of Central Church, Golden, Miss.

Miss Brown is a graduate of Baptist Memorial Hospital School of Nursing in Memphis and earned the bachelor of science degree in nursing from the University of Mississippi Medical Center School of Nursing in Jackson. She also attended Blue Mountain College and Belmont College.

Thomas E. Hilyer was appointed as a student worker in Spain. He is minister of education and youth at 38th Avenue Church, Hattiesburg.

Hilyer is a graduate of Mobile College and earned the master of religious education degree from New Orleans Seminary. He also attended Clarke College. Currently, he has

(Continued on page 4)

Reality demands change to reach Bold Mission goal, says Parks

By Anita Bowden

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptists must be willing to face a new and changing reality and make necessary adjustments in their mission efforts if Bold Mission Thrust is to be accomplished, warned Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks, president of the convention's Foreign Mission Board.

Speaking during the board's trustees meeting Feb. 10-12, Parks expressed "serious doubt that we are now on a course that will accomplish" the convention's Bold Mission Thrust goal of helping present the gospel of Jesus Christ to everyone by the year 2000.

He challenged trustees, staff, and missionaries to examine their maps of reality, quoting from M. Scott

Peck's book, "The Road Less Traveled." In the book, Peck says one's view of reality is like a map. He suggests most people have grown tired by middle age and no longer are interested in new information which could cause them to revise their maps.

Again referring to Peck's book, Parks wondered aloud if the reason he and others are sometimes reluctant to revise their maps is laziness—"laziness based on fear of what would happen if we grappled with the situation as it really is."

These concepts disturb him, Parks said. "I have to ask myself, our staff, and this board if that's where we are in transforming the vision of Bold Mission Thrust into reality. Have we tended to keep our maps of reality as

they were in 1976, and were they accurate then? Have we deluded ourselves to believing that, in fact, we were in on the road to accomplishing the overarching objective of Bold Mission Thrust?

"I do not have a blueprint for transforming that vision into reality," he acknowledged. But he offered several points to consider in reaching that reality.

First, he said, prayer is needed for God's presence, power, and answer to the problem. Then, a definition of Bold Mission Thrust by which Southern Baptists will know if they have accomplished their goal. Once that definition is in hand, "we will need to stand at the year 2000 and look this direction. How can we get from here to there?" he asked.

Some things which may need to be changed are the board's organization, its budget, the structure of its missions on the field, and the way Southern Baptists work with Baptists and other Christians around the world, Parks suggested. The last step is to determine the appropriate role for the board.

"This is where a fear generated by an unrecognized laziness may be blocking my vision," Parks acknowledged. "We are all busy. Yet there continues to stir on an emerging map of a new reality that some of that 'busyness' is not strategic. There

(Continued on page 5)

Volunteers "rough it" in Burkina Faso

Two Mississippi Baptist volunteers are in Burkina Faso for a month driving heavy equipment.

Buck Fortner of Lambert and Steve Griffin of Houston volunteered to aid in a project to construct water catchments ranging from two to ten acres of surface water. The two are working with Mississippi missionary Larry Cox.

According to the Foreign Mission Board, which offered the assignment,

the work will be done in the "bush" about a three hour drive from the capital city of Ouagadougou.

Instructions to Fortner and Griffin, both of whom traveled with the Mississippi disaster relief unit to Mexico City, included the notation that they would be "roughing it." The trip is scheduled to last from Feb. 22 to at least March 22. The volunteers are responsible for their own transportation.

Peace effort 'really matters,' Fuller says

By Dan Martin

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (BP) — The peace effort underway in the Southern Baptist Convention "really matters," according to Peace Committee chairman Charles Fuller.

"I am convinced what we are doing in this peace effort is worth it all because it is something that matters, really matters," Fuller told the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Press Association, made up of editors and staffers of the 37 state Baptist newspapers and representatives of Baptist Press.

Fuller told of the "potential for a breakthrough in our pursuit of reconciliation. We have not yet reached a breakthrough, but we may very well be approaching some significant areas where all sides can come together and honor our diversity while not dishonoring our convictions."

Fuller told the editors, "I would be remiss if I did not express, in my behalf and in behalf of the 22 members of the committee, our genuine appreciation for every contribution you and your publications have attempted to make toward a needed

and honest reconciliation in current Southern Baptist life."

He also said: "I realize my two press releases, calling upon Southern Baptists to abide by the convention's action to 'exercise restraint, to refrain from divisive action and comments and to reflect Christian love...' were perceived by some not only as a call for quiet but as a subtle or inadvertent restriction of the press."

"Regardless how those releases have been perceived, they were never intended to quell the rightful duty of any media. I am quite aware that you, who have been called of God to the ministry of Christian journalism, have both a professional and spiritual accountability to fulfill," he said.

"My appeals have been to responsible Southern Baptists in general, without any hidden agenda concerning the press or particular theological postures. In my opinion, the key is not resentful silence but responsible speech, not a muzzled tongue but a charitable spirit."

The chairman said he would "depoliticize the entire committee" if he had his way, or even recommend

a convention-wide moratorium on denominational politics. "Such is next to impossible, however, if we respect the Baptist view on personal liberty. We acknowledge the fact that Southern Baptist politics have been an ongoing reality for years, but our need is to reject the bad-spirited politics among us and seek a more wholesome version to the political process."

Fuller said within the SBC the "question is not whether we are theologically diverse, but how diverse can we be and maintain a legitimate denominational fellowship and a trustworthy base upon which to combine our support for mutual ministries."

"At this point the parameters are flexible, but they are not limitless," he added. "The nature of our theological relationships is such that we cannot settle it 'once and for all.' Of necessity, we will periodically pass through the painful assignment of renewing our understanding and re-establishing our oneness."

He said he believes Southern Baptists "are generally quite conser-

vative," adding, "there are those who are fundamental-conservatives and those who are moderate-conservatives." He noted there are those who fit the classic theological liberal designation, as well.

He said many Southern Baptists hold a position of "inerrancy, but I do not personally believe it is a position all must take in order to remain Southern Baptists." However, he said that to him "one hardly could claim to be faithful to the heritage of Southern Baptists... unless he or she held the Scriptures in the highest reverence, never dealing with them as less than God's written and revealed word."

Fuller also said, "Creedalism is not an answer for us, nor is indulgence."

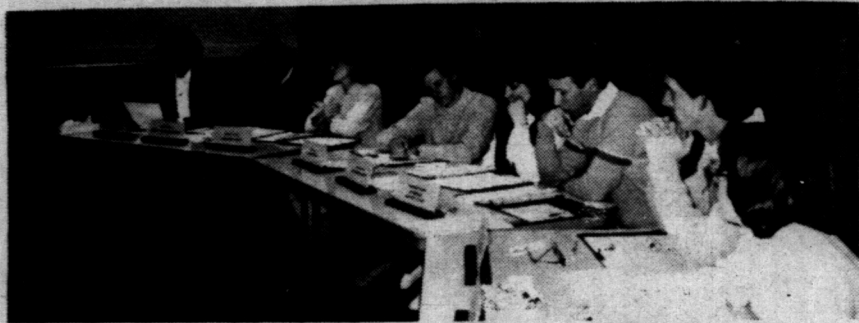
The chairman said each Christian is "competent to interpret the Scriptures, giving account directly to God... (but) if that Christian is going to represent other believers in enterprises they mutually undertake, there has to be some accountability to them as well."

There are five things Southern Baptists "must rediscover and

reestablish," he said, listing a restored sense of trust, a refreshed sense of humility, a recovered sense of mission, a renewed sense of cooperation, and a real sense of hope."

Fuller said the visits made to agencies by the subcommittees "have been quite positive in the main. I am grateful there have been so few problems related to those dialogue-visits, and what few problems have been reported, I am certain have been inadvertent. I have every confidence in the spirit of our subcommittees as well as every confidence in the attitude of our seminary and agency leadership as they attempt to be part of the reconciliation process."

Dan Martin is BP News Editor.



BSU appoints 67 for summer

1986 BSU State Student Missions Committee appointed 67 students to serve as student missionaries for the summer of 1986. Students from 16 campuses were interviewed by the committee at Camp Garaywa during the week of Feb. 11-15. Committee members (l to r) are B. J. Frew, Hinds Jr. College BSU Director; Randall Spears, U.S.M.; Deana Rushton, Jones Jr. College; Chris Reny, Belhaven College; LeAnne Griffin, chairman, Blue Mountain College; Weaver McCracken, BSU Director, Mississippi College; Scott Valentine, State BSU President, M.S.U.; and Claire Middlebrooks, M.U.W. Lloyd Lunceford, State Associate, Department of Student Work, was also a member of the committee.

Mississippi Mission

Campaign passes \$12 million

Harry E. Vickery, general chairman of The Mississippi Mission, the Baptist endowment campaign, announced the campaign has raised \$12,383,695.62 toward its \$40,000,000 goal at a recent meeting of the campaign Executive Committee.

The Family Gifts Division, comprised of the campaign leadership and the staffs and boards of Mississippi College, William Carey College, Blue Mountain College, and The Baptist Children's Village, is nearing the end of its solicitation. Charles W. Pickering, chairman of the Family Gifts Division, said, "\$2,383,420.93 has been pledged. And we are still soliciting some members."

"The faculties and staffs have raised \$660,958.95, 80 percent over their goal. This surely shows that the people closest to the need are behind the campaign 100 percent," he stated. "Their efforts were truly sacrificial."

The faculty and staff at Mississippi College pledged to date \$403,479.15; William Carey College, \$121,684.05; Blue Mountain College, \$70,878.75; and

the Baptist Children's Village, \$64,917.

The boards of the colleges and The Village, as well as members of the campaign committee, have pledged to date \$1,722,461.98, with several pledges not yet counted.

The Mississippi College Board pledged \$626,500; William Carey College, \$371,992.07; Blue Mountain College, \$321,000; The Baptist Children's Village, \$184,403.56; and, members of the committee who do not serve as board members, \$218,566.35.

"We are preparing to take this crucial campaign to individuals, corporations and foundations across the state," said Vickery. "People are recognizing the critical endowment needs of our Baptist institutions and are providing substantial financial support."

Vickery, who is president of Harry Vickery Chevrolet-Oldsmobile-BMW in Greenville and is chairman of the Mississippi College trustees, said, "Before we're done Christian higher education and child care will be on solid financial footing in Mississippi.

We've come a long way, but we've still got a lot to do."

The Mississippi Mission is the largest campaign ever mounted in Mississippi. Funds are being raised for endowment which will provide ongoing operating income to the four institutions. The Mississippi Baptist Convention initiated the campaign after two years of study by the Education Commission and a recommendation from a special task force.

In a period of continued rising costs, annual contributions and student tuition can not keep pace. The proportion of the operating costs supported by endowment funds has steadily declined from 23 percent in 1940 to four percent today. Vickery said, "We just cannot expect our institutions to offer the highest quality education and care without dramatic increases to the endowments."

The other nearly \$10 million in pledges has been made by individuals, although that part of the campaign has not officially opened yet.

Mississippians appointed

(Continued from page 3)

returned to classes at New Orleans Seminary.

He has been an assistant director of a center for the deaf in Mobile and was a self-employed teacher for missionary kids in Spain.

Daniel and Wanda Henderson were appointed to South Korea where he will be a general evangelist and she will be a church and home worker. He is pastor of Pleasant Home Church, Laurel.

Born and reared in Laurel, Henderson is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Bass Henderson of that city. He is a graduate of Jones County Junior College, William Carey College, and earned the master of divinity degree from

New Orleans Seminary.

Henderson has been pastor of Leesburg Church, Morton; Eastview Church, Laurel; and First Church, Battle Mountain, Nev.

Born in Fort Worth, Mrs. Henderson, the former Wanda Willson, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Willson of Hattiesburg. She is a graduate of William Carey College and has been a teacher in Pelahatchie. Currently she is a contract writer for the Sunday School Board.

The Hendersons have two children: Cynthia LaGale, born in 1980; and Nathaniel Lee, 1984.

Roger and Mary Bowers were appointed to Argentina where he will be a general evangelist and she will be a church and home worker. He is pastor of Bogue Chitto Church, Mount Hermon, La. He is a graduate of William Carey College and earned the master of divinity degree from New Orleans Seminary. He has been pastor of Harmony Church, Picayune.

Born in New Orleans, Mrs. Bowers, the former Mary Murphy is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Murphy. Her father is pastor of Lake Forest Church, New Orleans.

The Bowerses have two children: Lisa Elizabeth, born in 1980; and Jessica Megan, 1983.

Robert and Donna Leonard were appointed to Equatorial Brazil where he will be a religious education consultant and she will be a church and home worker. He is associate pastor of Baker Road Church, Baytown, Tex. He is a graduate of Mississippi College and earned the master of religious education degree from Southwestern Seminary.

He has been a manager trainee and selling associate for a company in Jackson and was minister of youth at Texas churches.

Born in Graham, Tex., Mrs. Leonard, the former Donna Cralle, is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Cralle of Jackson. She is a graduate (Continued on page 7)



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Moderate gains, losses reported for SBC in 1985

By Jim Lowry

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A mixture of small gains and losses characterizes the final report for 1985 statistics tracking the ministry efforts of Southern Baptists.

The most impressive gain for the year was recorded by the largest program, Sunday school, which increased by 1.3 percent, or 103,459 members, over last year, reaching a record total just short of eight million.

Overall, the statistics reveal results in Southern Baptist Convention programs close to projections which were released in December, with all areas reporting totals higher than anticipated.

The loss which has raised the most concern in baptisms, which decreased by 5.6 percent, or 20,957, in 1985, to a total of 351,071. Baptisms were projected to decline by 6.9 percent or 25,670.

The baptism total reflects that in 1985 it took 41.3 Southern Baptist church members to win one person to Christ. That baptism ratio has been worsening for the past several years. In 1955, when the membership of the denomination was 8.5 million, the ratio was one baptism to every 20.3 members. As late as 1975 the ratio was one to 30.2.

This decline comes at a time when church staffs are bigger than in the past, more students are enrolled in seminaries than ever before, and there are more evangelism workers throughout the convention.

Church membership recorded a

gain in 1985 of 1.0 percent, or 136,746, to reach 14,486,403. Membership was projected to increase by 0.7 percent, or approximately 100,000.

The baptism total reflects that in 1985 it took 41.3 Southern Baptist church members to win one person to Christ.

Of the 14.5 million members reported in Southern Baptist churches, 4.2 million are reported as non-resident members, which leaves resident membership at about 10.2 million.

The number of churches in the convention increased by 239 in 1985, to a total of 36,979. The number of churches has increased by about the same number for each of the past several years.

Church programs which experienced losses this year are Church Training and Woman's Missionary Union.

The Church Training enrollment decrease of 0.2 percent, or 3,869 members brings the new enrollment to 1,969,038 and is better than the projected 1.1 percent decline. This is the second consecutive loss for church training, but it follows four straight years of increases.

Enrollment in WMU decreased by 0.4 percent, or 4,390 members to a new total of 1,165,240. This program was projected to decrease by 0.5 percent.

The program of Church Music recorded its 20th consecutive gain, with an increase of 0.6 percent, or 10,353 participants, bringing enrollment to 1,677,738. The projected gain was the same as the actual increase.

The increase in Brotherhood enrollment was 0.9 percent, or 5,357 members, rising to 573,740. Brotherhood was projected to increase by 0.4 percent.

The 1.3 percent increase for Sunday School was more than the projected 1.0 percent gain and was the fourth consecutive record high for the denomination's Bible study program.

Giving in the denomination continued to increase at a pace ahead of inflation.

Total receipts in Southern Baptist churches increased in 1985 by 6.0 percent, or more than \$220 million, to \$3.89 billion. The projected increase was 5.7 percent.

Mission expenditures for the year increased by 7.5 percent, or \$42.6 million, to almost \$611 million. A gain of 6.7 percent was projected.

Information in the annual statistical report for Southern Baptists is compiled by the research services department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. The information is taken from Uniform Church Letters mailed by approximately 36,000 churches to the research services department.

Jim Lowry writes for the Sunday School Board.

Summary of the 1985 Southern Baptist Convention statistics:

	1985	1984	Gain or Loss	Percent Gain or Loss
Churches	36,979	36,740	239	0.7
Baptisms	351,071	372,028	-20,957	-5.6
Total Membership	14,486,403	14,349,657	136,746	1.0
Sunday School Ongoing Enrollment	7,960,796	7,857,337	103,459	1.3
Church Training Enrollment	1,969,038	1,972,907	-3,869	-0.2
Ongoing Music Ministry Enrollment	1,677,738	1,667,385	10,353	0.6
Woman's Missionary Union Ongoing Enrollment	1,165,240	1,169,630	-4,390	-0.4
Brotherhood Ongoing Enrollment	573,740	568,383	5,357	0.9
Total Mission Expenditures	\$610,668,080	\$568,059,173	\$42,608,907	7.5
Total Receipts	\$3,886,048,305	\$3,665,735,085	\$220,313,220	6.0

Parks: "Reality demands change"

(Continued from page 3)

appear to be other more serious matters that need to grab the attention of missionaries, staff, board, and Southern Baptists.

"If, in fact, the vision of Bold Mission Thrust is transformed into reality, much of the burden, responsibility, and privilege will be borne by this board and this staff and these missionaries. May God give us the faith and the love for a lost world that casts out the laziness created by fear."

In another report to the board, Isam Ballenger, director for Europe and the Middle East, explored some of the reasons the board works with registered churches in east European nations. He said the board has been criticized for not working with

unregistered or "underground" churches but Ballenger insisted that the board remains concerned for and interested in these groups as well.

"We seek to obey the laws of the various countries, believing that this approach will offer us more possibilities in the long run," he said. "We desire to assist all Baptists where possible. I think we must say that God is using both groups, and neither group is of such perfection as to condemn the other."

Ballenger acknowledged that leaders of certain socialist countries allow measures of freedom for Christians with a definite degree of self-interest. In turn, Baptists welcome every opportunity for evangelistic visits, training pastors, building churches, and

importing Bibles.

Even for those living in communist countries, the choice is not easy. Ballenger recalled sitting with a Romanian pastor and denominational leader as he and his wife wept over the dilemma. If they did not cooperate with the government, they would get no permits to build, to renovate, to carry on without, harassment. If they cooperated, others would call them agents of the government or compromisers.

Lewis Myers, director of Cooperative Services International, announced the selection of his associate, Jack Shelby, missionary to Thailand.

Anita Bowden writes for the Foreign Mission Board.

Thursday, February 27, 1986

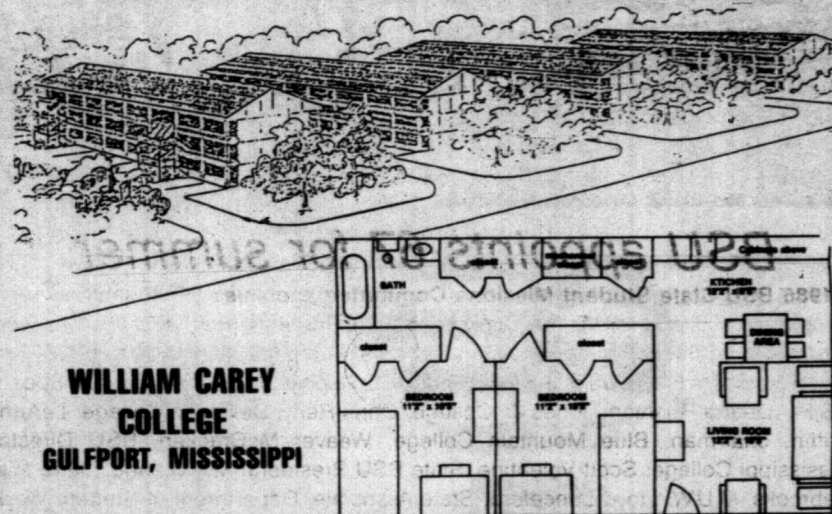
BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 5



ACTS plans new lineup

ACTS preaching team discusses new program lineup. Joel Gregory, second from left, pastor, Travis Avenue Church, Ft. Worth; James Flamming, pastor, First Church, Richmond; John Bisagno, pastor, First Church, Houston; and Richard Jackson, pastor, North Phoenix Church, Phoenix, discuss with Jimmy Allen, left, Radio and Television Commission president, the new programs. Jackson begins the "Baptist Hour" program March 2; Gregory begins Bible Study April 1; Bisagno continues with "Invitation to Life;" and Flamming will be on the "Baptist Hour" program beginning in September. Charles Stanley, pastor, First Church, Atlanta, whose "In Touch" program premieres on ACTS in March, was ill and unable to be present.

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- Deposit is due no later than May 1, 1986.
- Refunds can be made 30 days or longer prior to scheduled arrival date.
- Scheduling of specific activities is by chaperones provided by each group.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:



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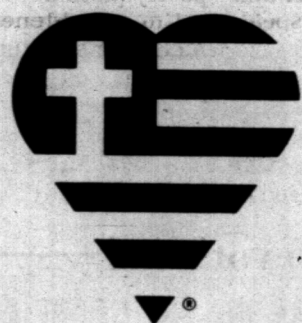
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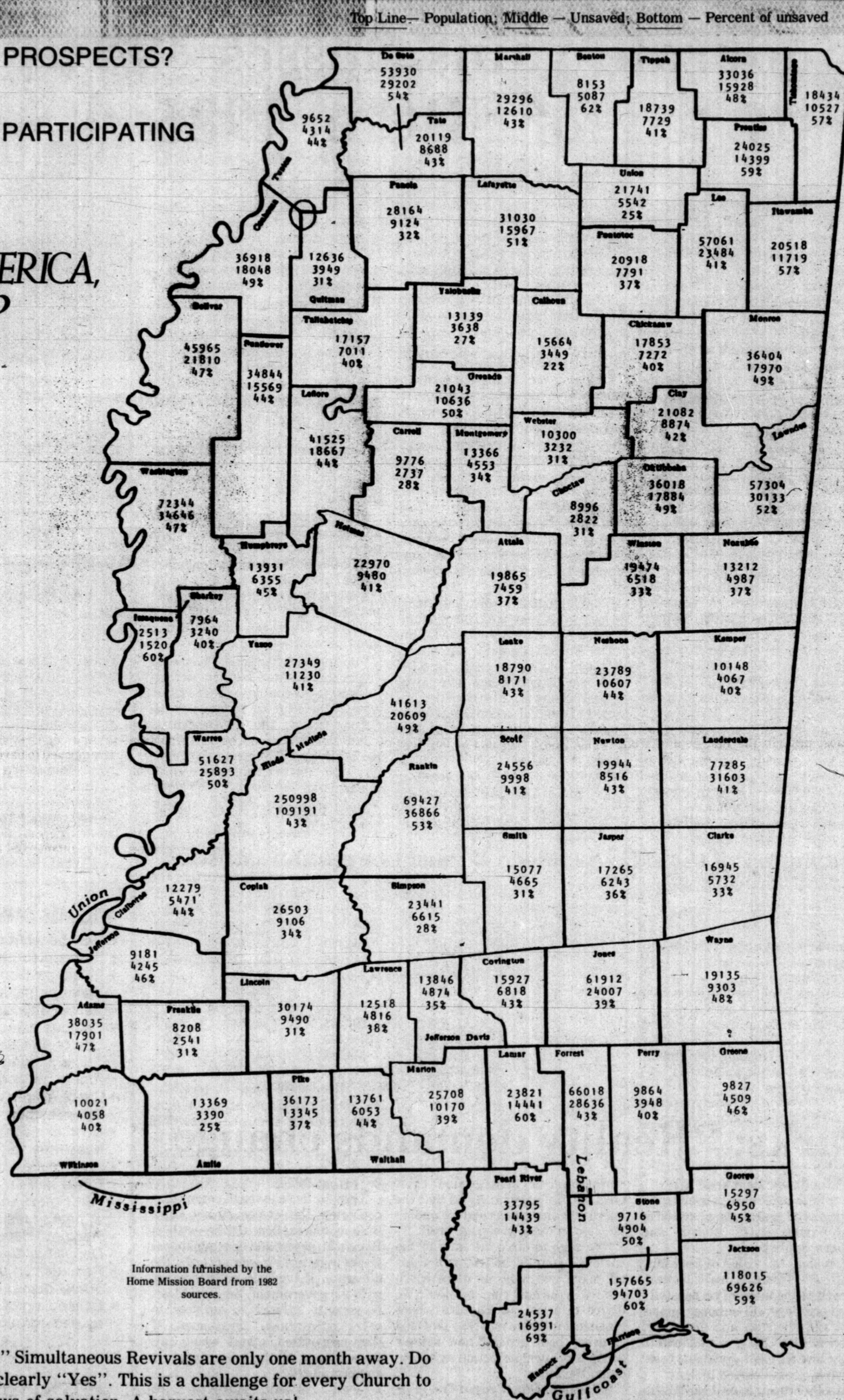
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Acts 1:8

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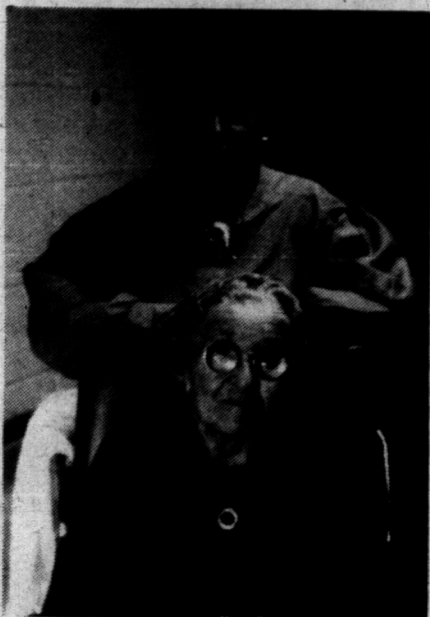
MISSISSIPPI

The Nationwide "Good News America" Simultaneous Revivals are only one month away. Do we have any prospects? The answer is clearly "Yes". This is a challenge for every Church to confront every person with the good news of salvation. A harvest awaits us!

Places And Places

by anne washburn mcwilliams

"One Day at a Time"



Nell Sherrer
Nannie Pearl Garrett

Grandma and Grandpa Allen had seven daughters and one son. Only four are still living. Mama will be 78 on March 4 (Happy Birthday!); Aunt Maysey is slightly younger; Uncle Zeddie is past 85; and Aunt Nannie Pearl will be 90 on April 28.

Aunt Nannie Pearl lives at Chapman Nursing Home now, in Alexander City, Ala. In her wheelchair, she sits most days in the hall near a front doorway — patient, sweet and loving, uncomplaining, cheerfully greeting all who enter, often reading, or talking with her daughter, Nell. Her sense of humor is untarnished. Her favorite song is "One Day at a Time."

Being uncomplaining, though, doesn't mean never expressing an opinion. She has her preferences and doesn't mind saying so, be it the kind of candy she likes, or the ball team she'd root for. Some woman came in, giving lap robes to the nursing home residents. She asked Aunt Nannie Pearl if she were an Auburn or Alabama fan. Most people in that vicinity are for Auburn, but not Aunt Nannie Pearl!

"Alabama!" she said, and so she received an Alabama lap robe.

About three years ago, she fell and broke a leg. A second fall brought surgery; in that a nerve or ligament controlling one foot was damaged in some way, it appears, for afterward that foot was useless.

Nell Sherrer, 62, a widow, and her mother's only child, tried hard to keep her at home, but finally the two resigned themselves to the nursing home solution.

Every day, Nell, who has no children of her own, visits with her mother, usually several hours. The two have always been close, and I can't think of one without thinking of the other.

Nannie Pearl Allen was born April 28, 1896, in Chambers County, Ala. She married Dick Garrett around 1918. He had joined the army during World War I, or had sought to, and had been told he had heart trouble, and sent home. (He lived to age 89, and died of a heart attack. The slate he used as a boy in school hangs now in my den.)

Aunt Nannie Pearl said she remembers that she and Uncle Dick rode the train from Opelika, Ala., across the state line to West Point, Ga., to get married. "Nancy" — he always called her.

There were 15 of us cousins on the Allen side of my family. Several of us would visit Aunt Nannie Pearl during second week of August, especially, when summer revival was going on at County Line Baptist Church. She was the aunt who lived nearest the church, where she and Nell are still members.

The Garrett house is gone now, but I remember its wide porches on three sides. Aunt Nannie Pearl and her mother-in-law, "Miss Lilla," always had pretty pot plants growing there on step-like shelves. In the wide hall, which doubled as a living room, stood a large striped pottery jar for holding umbrellas. On one side of the hall were two bedrooms and on the other were a bedroom and dining room, and a kitchen with a wood burning stove. All the bedrooms had fireplaces, and in one bedroom hung a picture of a deer in a forest. Iron bedsteads, antique dressers, carved chairs, filled the rooms. The water bucket was kept on a shelf on the back porch.

Nell, a pretty girl with blue eyes, black hair, and fair skin, in high school days had lots of boy friends. Sometimes she would manage to round up an extra date for me.

For a good many years, Aunt Nannie Pearl worked in a cotton mill.

Now Nell has a real ministry in the Chapman Nursing Home. Not only does she provide companionship for her mother. She also has made friends with many of the other residents. She writes letters for some of them, gets them a glass of water or a Tylenol tablet, listens to them when they simply need a listening ear.

"So many don't get any mail," she told me, "or never have any visitors. Or when their children or other visitors come, they may stay only five or ten minutes and then rush away again. So many of them are hungry for someone to talk with them and care about them. Sometimes they tell me funny things. 'Some are in need of money, too, and can't afford to buy the toothpaste and Kleenex which the nursing home doesn't furnish."

It's a clean, well kept place, and the staff members are kind and helpful. There is a planned program of entertainment, such as birthday parties, Valentine parties, and quartet singings. Bible studies and worship services are offered by church groups.

In spite of these, though, loneliness prevails in many hearts. And I think Nell is doing a lovely thing by being a friend to those who need a friend. Recently, when she had an accident and ruined her car, many of her nursing home friends were praying for her, that she might find another at a price she could afford. "I feel at home here," she said. And she is helping make it more like home for her mother and others.

It's the type of ministry a lot of us could perform.



Evangelists elect officers

These are the new officers of the Conference of Mississippi Baptist evangelists, the organization of professional evangelists in the state. From left they are Myrna Loy Hedgepeth of Jackson, vice president; Jerry Swimmer of Iuka, president; and Tom Larrimore of Jackson is secretary-treasurer. Ed Gandy, pastor of First Church, Kosciusko, is pastor advisor.

Letters to the Editor

Correction

Editor:

In preparing an article about disaster relief aid that appeared in the Feb. 6 Baptist Record, I incorrectly identified the Rev. Jerry Estes as moderator of our association. He is, in fact, the state Convention Board member. Our moderator is Chaplain Ed Holmes.

The error was mine — not the Record's. Thanks for helping correct this misinformation.

Jim Dalrymple
Associate director of missions
Gulf Coast Baptist Association

The right to speak

Editor:

As the mother of two young ministers who pastor churches in our state, I felt compelled to respond to Brother McKeever's article which was in the Baptist Record week before last.

First of all, I hope there won't be 12 people who agree with what he said.

Mississippians

(Continued from page 4)

of the University of Texas Nursing School and has been a private duty nurse in Baytown.

The Leonards have three children: David Price, born in 1978; Christine Elizabeth, 1981; and Ryan James, 1983.

Douglas and Mary Sue Brown were appointed to Uganda where he will be a youth worker and she will be a church and home worker. He is associate pastor of First Church, Galax, Va. He was once a minister of youth at Salem Church, Tylertown.

Frederick and Denise Kelley were appointed to Morocco where he will be a college teacher and she will be a church and home worker. He is a professor of mathematics at Samford University. Mrs. Kelley, the former Denise Mulligan, is a native of Union, Miss. They have two children: Leanna Alane, born in 1974; and James Frederick, 1978.

Church movies pre-1950, sought

NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Plans are underway for a third Baptist heritage video tape series, according to A. Ronald Tonks of the Historical Commission, SBC.

This series, produced by the Historical Commission, will contain a significant amount of old film footage. Tonks is seeking pre-1950 film or motion pictures that depict Baptist church life to borrow and copy for use in the video tapes.

"We are looking for old 'home-movies,'" said Tonks. "We know where to find the professional footage, but we are looking for 8mm, 16mm or 35mm films that illustrate tent revivals, worship services, creek baptisms, Lord's supper, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, preachers, evangelists, convention meetings, pastors' conferences, and WMU activities."

Individuals with such films or motion pictures should contact A. Ronald Tonks, c/o Historical Commission, SBC, 901 Commerce Street, Suite 400, Nashville, Tenn. 37203.

I would like to think that the rest of the Christian brethren would support and pray for these young men.

Second, I resent his calling these fine young men youngsters who do not know what they are talking about.

Every messenger who attends our conventions is supposed to be there representing Christ and the church from which he or she is a member and is supposed to have the right to speak regardless of age.

Third, I'd like to say these young ministers have already experienced a lot of crop failures, busted dreams, broken hearts, lonely valleys, and midnight oil; and I don't think God is

going to put them on the shelf to let them grow up just because one Mississippi Baptist preacher is threatened by their youth!

One thing in his article I would like to agree with, and I quote, "Admittedly, a lot of what us old people do and say at these denominational meetings often turn out to be ill-advised and poorly plotted."

I'm saddened by Brother McKeever's attitude, and I feel he has hurt his testimony with the young ministers in our state. Has he forgotten he was once a young minister?

Mrs. Homer Worsham
Holly Springs, MS

Devotional

Do nothing without prayer

By Michael O'Brien

Read: Acts 13:1-12

So after they fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Are we not presumptuous as we go about our lives? I mean really, do we consult the Lord in EVERY matter? Most of us are so guilty of turning to God, only when we have exhausted all other angles. We get sick, we see a doctor, we don't pray. We need money, we go to the banker, we don't pray. We have a problem, we go to a friend, we don't pray. And the best friend we have, is God. "What a friend we have in Jesus," the hymnist writes.

And what of "spiritual matters?" These teachers and preachers (for that's what prophets are) were in the act of worship, they had a direct encounter with the Holy Spirit, receive direct orders from God, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul," and what did they do? They sent them right off, right? Wrong! The words say they "fasted and prayed" and then they placed their hands on them. (that is gave them their blessing) and THEN they sent them off. Folks, they knew what God wanted from these two, and they were not presuming on God when they delayed. Rather, they were obeying God who had commanded "pray without ceasing" and "in all things pray."

Was it effective? I'll say. Look at what happened to Paphos. An encounter with a sorcerer who would prevent them from witnessing for Jesus. Paul knew what he was up against and he knew how to handle it. "You are a child of the devil, how the hand of the Lord is against you. You are going to be blind."

I recently read of a young lady who was backed into an alley by a man who was bent on assaulting her. She cried out, "In the name of Jesus Christ, leave me alone," he turned and fled, as he knew who he was and what he stood for. When we know that our life is prayed up, there is nothing we must fear.

"Father, we are your children, hear us when we pray, Amen."

Michael O'Brien is pastor, First, Lexington.



O'Brien

HOW • FAR • LOVE •

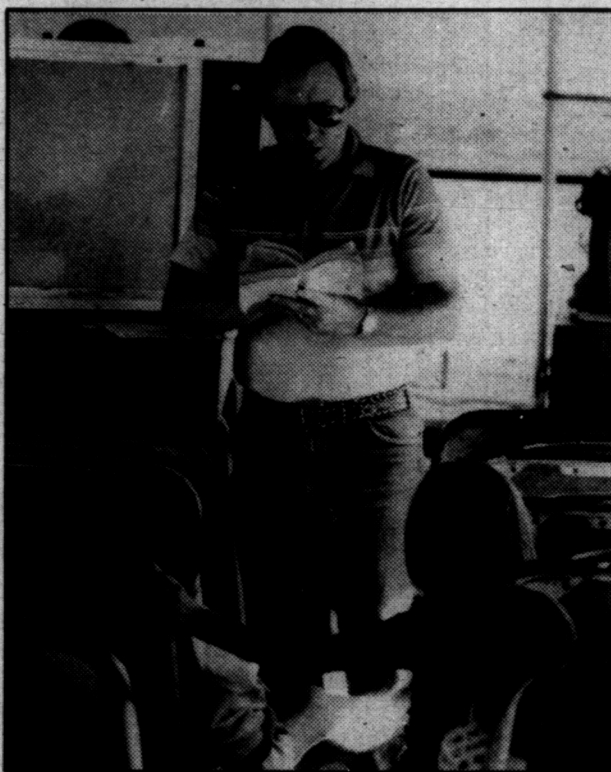
LOVE REACHES OUT TO PACIFIC PEOPLE—

As a home missionary serving in Honolulu, Villamu (right) teaches Samoans what it means to be born again as he does here with Samoan chief Leota Fata Toamato.



LOVE REACHES OUT TO ETHNICS—

Home missionary James Underwood uses an old school bus as a Chapel on Wheels, complete with games and Bible stories, to reach young children and families in Spanish-speaking communities in Las Cruces, New Mexico.



LOVE REACHES OUT TO THE PIONEER AREAS—

The population of the Frontier and Energy Basin associations near Cheyenne, Wyoming, is about 160,000. Paul Lewis (left), Home Mission Board appointed director of missions for the two associations, estimates that only 12 to 14 percent are churched. Starting new churches is a priority of his work, like the Misión Bautista Emanuel, the only language work in the association.

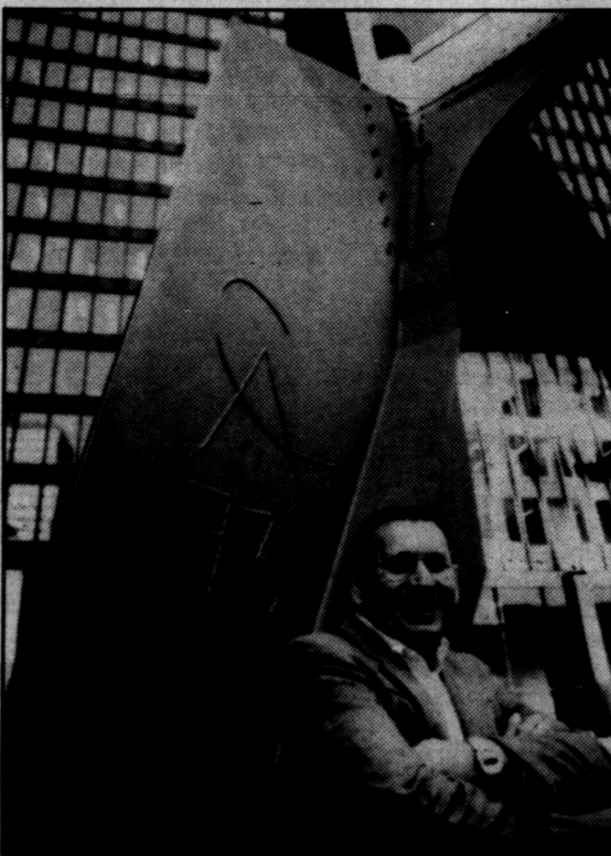


Week of Prayer for Home Missions

March 2-9, 1986

LOVE REACHES OUT WITH THE GOOD NEWS—

Home missionary Curtis Griffis trains pastors and laypeople in four Chicago-area associations to do evangelism by developing strategies, materials, and budgets for comprehensive evangelism.



LOVE REACHES OUT TO BLACK STUDENTS—

Home missionary Bill Flippin (right), here with Edward Davie, director of Georgia Baptist black church relations, coordinates black Baptist student work on the college campuses across Georgia. Through his influence, many students will enter the ministry, providing trained leadership for black Baptist churches.

Annie Armstrong
Easter Offering
Goal: \$33,500,000

Live teleconference becomes forum for nationwide home mission

By Carol S. Garrett

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — "What can I do to help reach my country for Christ?" was the reoccurring theme of questions asked by Southern Baptists viewing the February 8 Home Missions Teleconference.

Missions agency leaders and home missionaries fielded as many questions as the one and one half hour format would permit, with more than 240

viewers from around the country calling the live Birmingham site.

Approximately 6,000 people viewed the teleconference over the Baptist Telecommunication Network (BTN). The American Christian Television System (ACTS) broadcast the program for the first time this year adding a potential audience of 3 million people.

Churches can help win America for Christ for motivating their members to become personally involved, Home Mission Board President William Tanner told one caller.

"We are not telling people about Jesus Christ. Our greatest need is for 14 million of us (Southern Baptists) to be soul winners," he said.

Dorothy Sample, national president

of Woman's Missionary Union, said that churches with WMU organizations have such missions education in place and available to church members.

"All around us are those hurting, broken people. WMU endeavors to help Southern Baptists look into their eyes and hearts and feel their hurt, see their need. When we see the need,

the compassionate love of Christ will compel us to respond," Sample said.

Home missionary Curtis Griffis works daily to help people see the needs of those around them. He is the area director of evangelism for Chicago, Ill.

"I'm not most people's idea of an evangelist," he said. "I'm a weird dude with funny haircut and cowboy boots."

Baptist school in Beirut reports record enrollment

By Art Toalston

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)—In a country where buildings and families have crumbled during 11 years of civil war, the Beirut Baptist School is upholding "values that used to be highly prized, values that kept the country . . . (and) families together," says its superintendent, Jim Ragland.

Ragland and his wife, Leola, believe the school's emphasis on values is one reason it has a record enrollment as it celebrates its 30th anniversary. The school's students also have scored well on government examinations that determine future collegiate opportunities.

The west Beirut school reports 900 students in preschool through the first year of collegiate-level studies. Last year there were more than 800 enrolled. Three-fourths of the students are Muslim.

Three Southern Baptist missionaries, the Raglands and Nancie Wingo, work with 53 full- and part-time Lebanese teachers at the school. On the faculty are evangelicals, Shiite, Sunni and Druse Muslims and Greek Orthodox. A retired missionary, Mabel Summers, does secretarial work.

"Lebanon is changing very quickly," says Ragland, who has led the school since its beginning. "The students here feel very keenly the currents that are sweeping through the (Middle East) nations. Values are being disregarded, swept away by ideas and practices that, even in the United States, are not acceptable."

"The strife the last 10 years has had its effect, but even without the war, ideas from the West—drugs, pornography—have really hit this country."

A recent Newsweek article reports that Russian roulette is a deadly fad among some Lebanese young adults. The fad was sparked by Russian-roulette scenes in an American movie, "The Deer Hunter," which drew sellout crowds in Beirut two years ago.

"We're dying 10 times daily," one 20-year-old Muslim was quoted by the magazine as saying. "If I die while playing, at least I'll know how and I'll know I died once and for all."

Ragland says values important at the school include truth, a belief in God, honesty, hard work, parental respect, sexual morality, respect for national laws, and a respect for all people, regardless of their religion or economic background.

"I think people appreciate our fairness," Ragland adds. "We do not play favorites with one group over the other."

Mrs. Ragland, who directs the preschool, says she is thankful the students learn to study, to think and to treat their neighbors as themselves, and that they learn of "a faith that can help them go into the world and make a contribution."

She tells of a former student who, 12 years later, has enrolled her daughter at the school. "She sat in our office and wept and said, 'The happiest days of my life were the days I was at BBS (Beirut Baptist School).'"

One of Ragland's prayers for the

school is that the students "will see in us the gospel of Christ being lived out."

"It's just amazing that we're still able to keep going," says Mrs. Ragland. This term the school has closed only a few times because of sectarian fighting since classes began in October.

Prayer credited

Ragland credits prayer from churches in America with having a big part in the church remaining effective. "We simply could not have stayed open had we not had the prayer support behind us," Mrs. Ragland adds.

They are in telephone contact with Southern Baptist missionaries in east Beirut nearly every day. Five of about 15 missionaries and several of their children evacuated to Cyprus Jan. 18 because of intense sectarian fighting.

The Raglands haven't visited with the east Beirut missionaries in person for six months.

They are not the only Americans in west Beirut, however; others are at the American University and its hospital.

Although west Beirut has become predominantly Muslim, Ragland says there are a number of Christian families there. "Quite a few have left the area. Every day, in fact, you trucks being loaded up with furniture moving to the east. But many of families have chosen to stay. Their own property here, their friends are here. They are a part of the social fabric of this part of the city and they feel comfortable here."

Art Toalston writes for the Foreign Mission Board.

Workshop designed for interpreters for deaf

A workshop for interpreters for the deaf will take place March 14-15 at Lake Hillside (south of Hattiesburg on Highway 59).

The conference, designed for all persons interested in deaf ministry, will include an overview on deafness, given by Joyce Smith, a minister to the deaf in Black Mountain, N.C. Smith will also discuss problems faced by workers with the deaf, and hints for American Sign Language.

Arthur Craig, minister to the deaf at First Church, Houston, Tex., will

discuss Bible study basics; and Donna Dewett, a graduate student in deaf education at the University of Southern Mississippi, will lead sessions on beginning sign language. Becky Dewett, US-2er in Mississippi, is conference host.

Registration begins at 6 p.m., March 14, and the conference concludes at 7 p.m. the next day.

Pre-registration and fee of \$10 is required by March 3. This \$10 is a part of the \$39 conference fee. Write Becky DeWett, Box 530, Jackson, Miss. 39205.

MC BSU makes plans for May mission to Honduras

By Jane Hubbard

The Baptist Student Union is looking for a few good men—and women—to lend a helping hand on their latest mission project. Now that may be a request heard quite frequently from the BSU office, whether it be for Children's Village, Kids' Club, Spring Break Mission Trips, nursing homes, or any other of the many missions/outreach opportunities that BSU provides.

But their latest undertaking supersedes every other, and the secret is out: MC BSUs are going to Honduras May 18-30. A group will leave New Orleans by air May 18, armed with key words, phrases, and testimonies in Spanish. Their purpose? "To lay a foundation for a new mission chapel of Bethany Baptist Church in El Progreso, Honduras; and to do finishing and light remodeling work within the sanctuary and education building of the existing church structure."

"They will also conduct special

evening programs in many of the churches and missions of the Honduras Baptist Mission. In addition cultural activities and touring will be done in order to gain a fuller understanding of the country and its people and customs."

Some may become skeptical, and wonder if this is just another vacation falsely taken in the pretense of Christian missions. However, the Missions Committee has taken its job seriously and responsibly and says that students are desperately needed to do not only the physical work but also to offer Christian support and fellowship to the college-age neighbors of Honduras' mission churches.

The host missionaries, Stanley and Glenna Stamps, have stressed that there will be no lack of useful and much needed work to keep the student missionaries busy. Mr. Stamps is an alumnus of MC, as is his daughter Rhonda. Weaver McCracken is BSU director at Mississippi College.

REACHES



LOVE REACHES OUT TO BEGIN NEW CONGREGATIONS—

In the past five years, home missionary Dottie Williamson has begun two churches in metropolitan Richmond, Virginia, and is busy starting a third. After teaching school for nearly a decade, Williamson caught the church planting vision as a seminary student.



sions questions

Instead of preaching to millions of people, I plan with a few around a table."

Griffis' job is to determine ways to penetrate a field of seven million people with the news of Christ, and get them to respond, one by one.

James Smith, Brotherhood president, pointed out that Brotherhood

organizations in churches help men see the mission field around them.

Paul Lewis, a director of missions in Cheyenne, Wyo., believes prayer motivates people to become involved in missions.

The 1986 Week of Prayer for Home Missions will be March 2-9.

Carol Garrett writes for WMU, SBC.

Crowder lawsuit first in SBC history: Bennett

ATLANTA (BP)—A lawsuit filed in federal district court in Atlanta is the first such suit in the 146-year history of the Southern Baptist Convention, according to Harold C. Bennett.

Bennett, president of the SBC's Executive Committee, said "no messenger has ever undertaken to sue the Southern Baptist Convention prior to the filing of this suit."

Bennett's comment came in a 25-page affidavit filed in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia in response to a suit filed Dec. 5 by a Birmingham, Ala., couple and a layman from Windsor, Mo.

Robert S. Crowder, his wife, Julia, and Henry C. Cooper filed their suit against the SBC and the Executive Committee, claiming their rights had been violated during the annual meeting of the nation's largest non-Catholic denomination in Dallas, June 12, 1985. Their complaint revolves around the election of the denomination's Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees, which nominates trustees for the 20 national agencies of the convention.

The attorneys for the SBC filed a motion seeking to have the Crowder lawsuit dismissed on First Amendment grounds and on a statute which requires plaintiffs to show \$10,000 damages in order to sue in federal court.

In his affidavit, Bennett speaks of the history of the Southern Baptist Convention, discusses denominational organization, comments on the denominational controversy and gives his perspective on the issue at litigation and efforts to resolve the conflict.

"Rugged individualism kept Baptists from forming a denomination until 1813," he wrote. "Baptist churches were then, and are now, each an independent, self governing body... so is every other Baptist organization. There is no ecclesiastical sequence."

Bennett commented each church is free to "cooperate" with the SBC, and "is free to cease its cooperation at any time. The relationship between the church and the Southern Baptist Convention is established by the church's choice unilaterally."

Currently, there are 36,740 churches "in friendly cooperation with" the convention and "sympathetic with" its purposes, he said. In Dallas 13,960 churches from 50 states sent a total of 45,519 messengers, he said.

The SBC, he said, has no existence "except during the convention in session some three days each year. It has no employees and owns no property." He added the Crowders and Cooper were messengers, but says "their messenger status ended at the adjournment of that convention."

He added "the plaintiffs may or may not be messengers to the 1986 convention."

Bennett said all aspects of the SBC government—annual meetings, "the equality of all messengers, the majority vote concept, the insistence of the convention on its autonomy and independence and all other facets of organization, polity and governance—are rooted in religious belief."

Bennett discussed the sequence of events June 12, 1985, which resulted in the election of the 1986 Committee on

Boards, and the subsequent lawsuit. He pointed out the committee was elected "by a majority of the messengers present and voting by a vote of 13,123 to 9,581."

Bennett wrote: "The Southern Baptist Convention is a dynamic organization which assumes the position of a majority of messengers at a given convention. The systems in the convention are designed to minimize radical departure from traditional policies... and to lessen the impact which one convention may have on the direction of the convention's institutions."

He pointed out SBC President Charles F. Stanley of Atlanta was elected to a first term in 1984, appointed a Committee on Committees which, at the 1985 convention, nominated a Committee on Boards which will report to the 1986 annual meeting.

"Therefore, when the 1986 convention elects members to the various boards in 1986, it will be the culmination of an event in which the messengers at three separate conventions have had input," he added.

In addition, he said, the messengers to the 1986 annual meeting may elect the nominees of the Committee on Boards, may elect some and reject others, or "may totally reject the nominees offered... elect those of their own choosing, resolve to censure the Committee on Boards, the 1985 Committee who nominated the Committee on Boards and the president who named the Committee on Committees, or whatever the majority wishes."

"The Southern Baptist Convention in session is the ultimate decision-making body within the denomination," he added.

He said the Executive Committee has acted on the Crowders' complaint, and that the committee's Bylaws Workgroup currently is discussing modification of bylaws under which the disputed election was conducted. In addition, he said, the SBC Peace Committee has scheduled discussions of the controversy and dispute.

The SBC Committee on Order of Business has scheduled a discussion of the bylaw concerning the disputed election, Bennett said, prior to the

presentation of the 1986 Committee on Committees.

"Thus within the processes of the convention, the bylaw interpretation about which the plaintiffs complain is being addressed and the messengers at the 1986 convention will have the opportunity to work their will on the subject," he said.

"The same convention also will have an opportunity, if the messengers share the plaintiffs' opinion of the manner by which the Committee on Boards... was elected in 1985, to repudiate that election by rejecting that committee's nominees to the director positions on the various institutions of the convention and membership on the standing committee," he said.

Bennett noted that since 1979, "messengers... have elected presidents identified with the 'inerrantist' faction within the convention. The power of the messengers to influence the doctrinal policies of the boards, commissions and institutions of the convention is seen to begin in the election of the convention president who holds the power to name the committee on committees, which begins the process by which the directors of these boards, commissions, and institutions ultimately are elected by the messengers."

"These directors determine, within the parameters of standing convention instructions, the policies and theological stances of the boards..." he added.

Bennett said the controversy over the 1985 annual meeting "arises out of, relates to and is a product of... disputes over religious doctrine and related disputes over control of the trustee bodies which make policy for institutions associated with the... convention, which disputes have affected the... convention since 1979."

The Executive Committee president concluded his affidavit by quoting from Paul's letter to the Ephesians (4:31-32), which urges Christians not to harbor "bitter resentment or anger" and for there to be "no bad feeling of any kind among you. It encourages kindness and compassion and calls on Christians to 'forgive others as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.'"

FCC repeats its promise not to ban religious programs

WASHINGTON, D. C. (EP)—In response to a revival of rumors, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has issued a public notice, reiterating that "it is not considering, nor has it ever considered, a petition by Madalyn Murray O'Hair, or anyone else, to ban religious programming on radio or television."

The statement emphasized that the FCC is prohibited by the Communications Act of 1934 from censoring broadcast material, and by the First Amendment from interfering with the freedom of speech in broadcasting.

The statement also noted that in 1975 the FCC unanimously denied a petition which asked the agency to "freeze" applications by religious institutions for TV or FM channels reserved for educational stations. This petition was "routinely assigned the rulemaking number RM-2493" according to the FCC, and though the petition was denied, the Commission has received over 16 million pieces of mail and "a corresponding number of telephone calls" on the mistaken belief that the FCC was considering a ban on religious broadcasting.

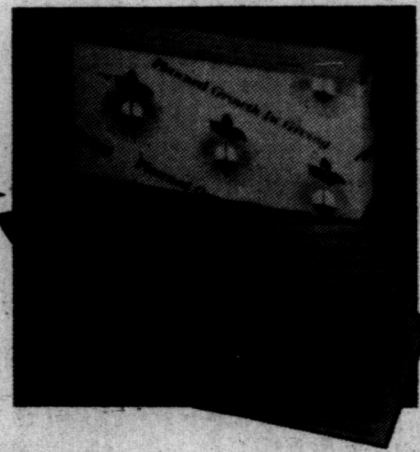
Divorce rate drops again

Washington, D.C. (EP)—America's divorce rate has declined for the second straight year, following 20 years of increases, government statistics disclosed Jan. 3. There were 1,158,000 divorces in the U.S. in 1983 (the last year for which statistics are available), 12,000 fewer than 1982.

That one percent drop followed a four percent drop from 1981 to 1982, reversing a 20-year trend that resulted in an all-time high of 1,213,000 divorces in 1981. However, provisional estimates indicate divorce rates may once again increase when final figures are reported from 1984 and 1985.

Geographic variation is strong in divorce patterns across the country. The Northeast has the lowest divorce rate of 3.6 per 1,000 people, followed by the Midwest with a rate of 4.6. The South's rate was 5.6, while the West's was the highest at 5.8 per 1,000 people. Massachusetts had the lowest divorce rate at 3.2; Nevada had the highest divorce rate in 15.0, an increase from 1982's 14.9 rate.

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Convention/institution dilemma: accept liability or lose control

By Lonnie Wilkey

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Two recent actions have focused attention on control of institutions — particularly colleges and universities — by Baptist state conventions.

Trustees of Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C., at their December meeting, in essence, severed ties with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina when they voted to elect all their successors, creating a self-perpetuating board which would not need approval from the state convention.

The Wake Forest action came after messengers to the state convention's annual meeting approved a new covenant relationship with the 152-year-old Baptist school, but declined to give the two-thirds majority necessary to change language in the convention's constitution to accommodate the new provisions.

Although some North Carolina Baptists question the legality of the trustee's action, the fact that they altered the university's relationship with the state convention has caused Baptist leaders throughout the Southern Baptist Convention to ask: "Can trustees sever an institution's ties with its sponsoring state convention?"

In January a 34-member Constitutional Review Committee of the Baptist General Convention of Texas met to discuss major concerns, primarily that of relinquishing control of its schools to avoid ascending liability — a situation where the convention could be held legally and financially responsible for actions on the college campus — or maintaining control and assuming liability.

The committee was formed as a result of the BGCT's annual meeting in November when a proposed slate

of changes to the convention's constitution and bylaws was approved by a majority vote but failed to gain the required two-thirds majority for passage.

Five of the changes dealt with terminology — substituting the words "affiliated with" for "owned and controlled by" which some Texas Baptists felt would safeguard the convention from ascending liability.

Some messengers, however, spoke against the proposal, fearing it would make it easier for an institution to pull away from the convention. The Wake Forest University trustee action, even though it had nothing to do with ascending liability, caused additional concern.

One Southern Baptist education leader said he feels strongly the change in terminology would make no difference in court. Arthur L. Walker Jr., executive director of the SBC Education Commission, told Baptist Press he believes if the situation of ascending liability went to court, the court would hold "affiliated with" meant the same thing as "owned and controlled by."

As a result, Walker said, Baptist state conventions should accept that they must assume responsibility for their institutions.

The opportunity for human beings to participate in the spread of the gospel, he said, carries with it the burden of liability which might result from human action and even human error in the course of witnessing.

Walker noted the problem of ascending liability always has been present, but only recently has it become an item of major concern. He cited the growth in litigation as one reason.

Walker said an even more impor-

tant factor is that charitable institutions are not exempt from prosecution today. It used to be, he reflected, courts would throw out cases against religious bodies. Now they are willing to hear such cases and they often are sympathetic with the injured party, he added.

As for Baptist schools pulling away from the state conventions if given the chance, Walker said most Baptist colleges would not do so because they want and need the denominational tie.

Current Civil Rights legislation in Congress makes it advantageous for colleges and universities to be affiliated with a religious denomination, Walker suggested. Schools which can show religious connections, he continued, can be exempt from some aspects of civil rights concerns.

For example, in Title IX of the Higher Education Act of 1975, Walker said Baptist colleges can contend they do not have to offer abortion counseling, birth control counseling, or coed dormitories because of religious convictions.

Baptist colleges are fortunate in this respect because they can show close ties with a denomination. "There are many evangelical Christian institutions that are envious of the privileges and status of colleges closely related to conventions or groups of churches," he said.

The SBC agency head warned, however, not to push institutions to the point where they could not call themselves "Baptist."

"Southern Baptists must remember our colleges provide the opportunity for study and the transmission of truth within a Christian world view. We need this influence in our society," he said.

Lonnie Wilkey writes for the SBC Education Commission.

Religious leadership group to recognize 12 women

Barbara Barnes of Northminster Baptist Church, Jackson, is one of twelve Mississippi women who will be recognized by the Mississippi Religious Leadership Conference at its twelfth annual banquet on Monday night, March 10, at 7 p.m., at Calvary Baptist Church, Jackson.

Theme of the banquet this year is "They Also Serve — Women in the Ministry." It is an attempt to highlight significant contributions made by women to their respective religious bodies and to their communities at large. For each person named, according to Banquet Chairperson Cathy Palmquist, there are many more women who have made equally significant contributions.

John A. Thomas, pastor of Northminster Church, will make a keynote address. Another address, from a different point of view, will be made by Katherine Wells, associate director, Mississippi Conference Council on Ministries of the United Methodist Church.

Others being recognized are Thea Bowman of Canton with The Catholic Diocese of Jackson; Maria Coon of Gloster with Holy Family Church; Carol Evans of Jackson with St. Richards Catholic Church; Lois Fair-

man of Jackson with Christ Lutheran Church; Linda Foshee of Jackson with Our Home Universalist Unitarian Church.

Also Lisa Hall of Jackson with Briarwood Presbyterian Church; Mary (Molly) McBride of Jackson with St. Andrews Cathedral; Kitty Mitchell of Jackson with Beth Israel Congregation; Mary A. Poindexter of Jackson with Central United Methodist Church; Maggie Little Turner of Jackson with Farish Street Baptist Church, and Eva Yancy Woodard of Jackson with Central United Methodist Church.

The Mississippi Religious Leadership Conference constitutes a statewide forum for both lay and clergy to share common concerns, to communicate ideas, to establish and coordinate statewide programs, and to serve as a vehicle for responding in a united voice to important issues and needs affecting the well being of the people of Mississippi.

Until February 28 the banquet is open, with advance reservations on a first come basis, to interested members of the public. Tickets, which are nine dollars per person, may be obtained by contacting the office of The Mississippi Religious Leadership Conference at 981-6752.

Blind ministerial student may receive state aid

WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. Supreme Court ruled Jan. 27 the Constitution's First Amendment ban on an establishment of religion does not mean that a blind student may not receive state vocational funds because he is studying for the ministry at a Bible college.

At the same time, the high court informed the Washington Supreme Court it may apply that state's stricter ban on any form of aid to sectarian institutions if it chooses to do so.

In a unanimous ruling, the court nevertheless reversed a Washington Supreme Court decision that the federal constitution forbids assistance, such as that claimed by Larry Witters, the blind ministerial student who has pursued religious training at Inland Empire School of the Bible, a private Christian college in Spokane, Wash.

Justice Thurgood Marshall, who consistently has voted against state efforts to fund sectarian schools at the elementary and secondary levels, disagreed with the lower court's finding that Witters' use of state funds for religious training had the primary effect of advancing religion.

Noting the "well-settled" precedent "that the Establishment Clause is not violated every time money previously in the possession of a State is conveyed to a religious institution," Marshall wrote that Witters' choice to spend vocational funds for religious education was his, not the state's.

He wrote further that no "significant portion" of the funds expended under the Washington program "will end up flowing to religious education," and that Witters' choice does not "con-

fer any message of state endorsement of religion."

Witters' long legal battle began in 1979, when he applied for assistance under Washington's vocational rehabilitation law in order to pursue a program of education leading to service as a pastor, missionary or youth director.

The child's view

Nurse educators offer workshop about divorce

The Southeast Mississippi Inservice Council, a group of nurse educators in South Mississippi, is offering a workshop entitled *Divorce from the Child's Perspective*.

Rivers Carpenter, a certified social worker with ten years experience working with children, will speak on such topics as what should be said to the children, physical and psychological problems to look for, special problems of stepfamilies, and the therapist and divorce litigation.

The workshop will be held in the Evergreen Room of Methodist Hospital of Hattiesburg 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., March 20. There is a \$20.00 fee for those who are not council members.

For more details, contact Gloria Garretson, RN at 268-8165 or Sammie McGee, RN at 264-2077.

What many folks need is not a new position, but a new disposition.

Students work at Camp Smile, entertain seamen in Mobile

By Wayne Vandiver

Nine people from the Itawamba Junior College Baptist Student Union traveled to Citronelle, Ala., Dec. 27-Jan. 4 to work at Camp Smile. This is the Mobile Baptist associational camp located 30 miles north of Mobile.

This was the first of three mission trips sponsored by the IJC BSU for the 85-86 school year. The team consisted of Connie Vandiver, Fulton; Pat Beard, Fulton; Wendell Calhoun, Amory; Angie Cole, Hatley; Barry Jernigan, Hatley; Ricky Mitchell, Fulton; Ron Clayton, Fulton; and Pam Vandiver, Corinth.

The work consisted of a variety of jobs. Students (1) washed walls and windows; (2) cleaned and cut up chickens; (3) moved everything out of a big two-story house in Mobile; (4) cleared a large tract of timber to make room for a large picnic shelter; (5) hauled off all the limbs, logs, and brush from the cleared area; (6) moved all the furniture from one furniture store to another as a favor to Johnny Tucker, Southern Baptist evangelist

from Citronelle; (7) hauled off large loads of trash and old furniture; (8) repaired broken wheelchairs; (9) moved furniture in and out of various camp buildings; (10) painted some chairs and a large bathroom; (11) fixed some of their plumbing; and (12) helped the camp staff get ready for a children's retreat.

One of the highlights of the trip was helping the staff at the International Seaman's Mission in Mobile. The students had the opportunity to go there on New Year's Eve to share with men from five countries.

They even got to hear a sermon preached in three languages by the director of the missions. One important ministry of this mission is placing in every man's hands a Bible which is written in his own language. Many men have been saved on the various ships that dock in Mobile because of his service.

The group also had charge of a Sunday night worship service at a local church. The service consisted of puppets, drama, ventriloquism, singing,

and testimonies. They also did two other puppet shows for a Wednesday night service at another local church and for the children at the children's retreat at Camp Smile.

The best part of the whole trip was what happened on New Year's Day around 1:00 a.m. One of the students accepted Christ as her Lord and Savior after being witnessed to by another student.

The Lord used a week of hard work to draw some students closer together, closer to him, and closer to the meaning of the word "missions." He also used the experience to draw another soul to himself.

Wayne Vandiver is IJC BSU director.

A person who pours oil on troubled waters today is in big trouble with ecologists.

Care may kill some, but "don't care" kills more.

SBC hunger gifts set record in '85

By David Wilkinson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — After witnessing with other Americans the vivid television images of starving Africans, Southern Baptists in 1985 responded with a record \$11.8 million in contributions to their denomination's program of hunger relief at home and abroad.

The 1985 total shattered the 1984 record by more than \$4.6 million as gifts to the hunger funds administered by the Southern Baptist Foreign and Home Mission Boards surpassed the previous year's total for the eighth consecutive time.

The total 1985 overseas and domestic hunger receipts of \$11,830,146 reflect a dramatic 65 percent increase over the 1984 figure of \$7,166,772.

The Foreign Mission Board reported receipts of \$10,625,897 for overseas hunger relief in 1985, an increase of more than \$4 million over 1984. The combined FMB's 1985 figure for hunger relief and general relief was \$11,833,271.

At the Home Mission Board, receipts for domestic hunger nearly doubled from \$617,871 in 1984 to \$1,204,249 in 1985. The figures do not reflect monies given for hunger that were utilized in local churches, associations, and state conventions.

Hunger experts at both mission boards and the Christian Life Commission, which coordinates education and action on hunger issues among Southern Baptists, responded to the record level of giving with mixed emotions.

John Cheyne, Foreign Mission Board senior consultant for human needs ministries, said the record total reflects Southern Baptists' "growing confidence" in the convention's hunger relief program. On the other hand, he noted that giving to overseas hunger relief tailed off in the last quarter of 1985 in stark contrast to the pattern of previous years. For example, receipts for hunger and general relief for December 1985 totalled \$1.83 million compared to more than \$2.4 million in December 1984, he said.

"My personal evaluation is that the American public is beginning to experience some burnout after last year's overwhelming media exposure to world hunger," Cheyne said. "The news media probably will turn their attention to other issues in 1986, even though the needs are still acute in many countries in Africa."

At the Home Mission Board, national hunger consultant Nathan Porter commended state convention leaders for "a holistic missions strategy that includes the needs of the hungry in our own country." More state conventions, (including Mississippi) he said, have now implemented the 80/20 division of undesignated hunger gifts suggested by the Southern Baptist Convention (80 percent to overseas hunger relief and 20 percent to domestic hunger relief.)

David Wilkinson writes for the Christian Life Commission.

Mississippi Baptist activities

- Mar. 2-9 Week of Prayer for Home Missions (WMU Emphasis)
- Mar. 3 Video Production Workshop; FBC, Gulfport; 7-9 p.m. (DBS)
- Mar. 3-5 Planned Growth in Giving Update Seminar; Camp Garaywa; 11 a.m., 3rd-Noon, 5th (STEW)
- Mar. 6 Mississippi Baptist Church Music Conference; FBC, Natchez; 11 a.m.-9 p.m. (CM)
- Mar. 7-9 Acteens Queen's Court; Camp Garaywa; 5 p.m., 7th-Noon, 9th (WMU)

Names in the News

J. R. Reagh was honored with a surprise birthday celebration on the occasion of his 80th birthday at First Church, Byhalia, after the morning worship service, Feb. 16.

Mr. Reagh's four daughters and two sons were present: Richard Dee Reagh of Byhalia, Mrs. Delane Anglin of Southaven; Mrs. Yvonne Burks and James Lloyd Reagh of Memphis, Mrs. Ahnette Alderman of Seattle, Wash., and Mrs. Nettie Lou Joiner of Horn Lake. Seven of the fourteen grandchildren and five of the seven great-grandchildren were in attendance.

Jerry Nichols, Chairman of the Board of Deacons, was Master of Ceremonies. Mr. Reagh's favorite song, "In the Garden," was sung. J. B. Going, Jr. represented the church in a tribute to Mr. Reagh. Kenneth McMillen, pastor, expressed appreciation to Mr. Reagh for encouragement, inspiration, faithfulness, and friendship.

Sammy J. McDonald is available for interim pastorates; revivals, preaching or music; or full-time positions. He is a graduate of Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary. His address is 58 Moncure Rd., Florence, MS 39073 and his home phone is 601-845-6330.

Charity is the sterilized milk of human kindness.

1st, Jackson, singles ministry will present divorce recovery seminar

"Whole persons from broken marriage..." will be the theme of a divorce recovery seminar to be conducted at First Church, Jackson, Feb. 28-March 1 in the Fellowship Hall.

David Roddy, minister of single adults, First Church, Dallas, Tex., and former minister of education at First, Jackson, will be the speaker.

Registration will begin at 6 p.m. on Feb. 28 and meetings will end on March 1 at noon.

Topics to be discussed will be "Re-entering Life," "Factors of the Divorce Experience," "Sexuality," and "Remarriage."

Deborah McBeath, a graduate of William Carey College, has been named head women's basketball coach at the University of Alabama in Huntsville by athletic director Paul Brand. McBeath has served as assistant coach at the University of Montevallo and Troy State University. She has served as acting head coach for UAH since November.

Melody Nowell, 1985 Youth Speaker's Tournament winner, will give her speech "How I'm Developing As A Believer" at Crowder Church, Crowder, Mar. 2. Harvey Sewell is pastor.

Melody is the daughter of Pat Nowell, pastor of First Church, Tunica.

Anthony Norris, son of David and Jettie Norris of Scobey, has been selected to the Outstanding Young Men of America for 1985. He is the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Loden of Mantachie and the late Mr. and Mrs. C. R. Norris of Saltillo.

Norris is a member of First Church, Jackson and a dental student at the University of Mississippi Medical Center.

David Webb was ordained recently at Forest Church. He and his wife, Lisa, have moved to Potosi, Missouri, where he has begun work as minister to youth in the Potosi Baptist Church.

G. T. Henderson, minister, dies

Gurla T. Henderson, 86, died Feb. 18, at Rolling Acres Retirement Home in Raleigh. Services were held at 2 p.m., Feb. 19, at Lorena Baptist Church in Smith County with burial in the church cemetery.

Henderson had pastored at 20 churches in Scott, Smith and Simpson counties. He was a member of Lorena Baptist Church.

He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Ollie Henderson; sons, Odoul Henderson and Wilbur Henderson, both of Lorena; two brothers; three sisters; six grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

Revival Dates

McDowell Road, Jackson: Mar. 2-7; 7 p.m. nightly; Jerry Johnston, evangelist, and Jim Sanderwirt, musician, of the Jerry Johnston Ministries, Shawnee Mission, Kan.; "Pistol Pete" Maravich, special guest, Mar. 7; Gary W. Rivers, pastor.

Corinth Church, Rt. 1, Heidelberg: March 9; 6:30 p.m.; Danny Lanier, full time evangelist, Little Rock, Miss. will present "The Good News" with music as well as preaching. Edd Holloman, pastor.

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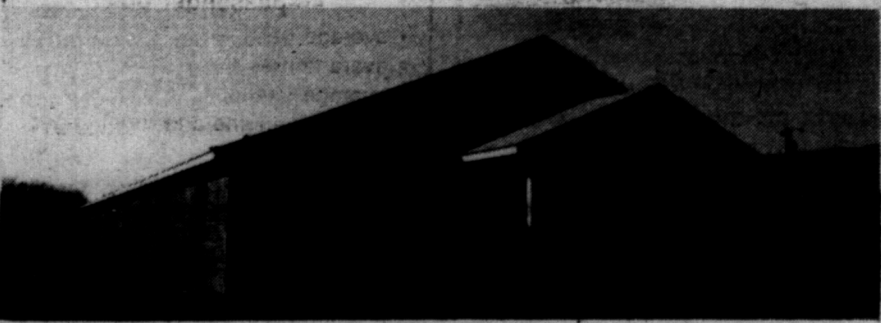
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Swiftwater dedicates fellowship hall

Swiftwater Church, Greenville, held a homecoming program which was planned around the first use of the fellowship hall and a dedication service, on Nov. 24. John Tucker, former pastor, preached the homecoming sermon. Gene Foshee, pastor, during the construction of the \$94,000.00 facility, led the dedication prayer. Mrs. Beryl Greer, WMU director, acknowledged the ladies who were working on decorating the facility. Wayne Mosley, chairman of deacons, recognized those who served on the building committee. Billy Schultz, Brotherhood director, called on members and guests alike to make special donations to complete furnishing the building. The afternoon was climaxed by a praise service conducted by Tim Edwards and the Crusaders from Grace, Miss. Pictured are the inside and the exterior of Fellowship Hall. Granville H. Watson, Jr. is interim pastor.



capsules

Iranians refuse to sit with women

HARARE, Zimbabwe (EP) — Iranian President Ali Khamenei, refused to attend a state banquet held here in his honor, because women sat at the head table and wine was to be served. Khamenei wanted his Islamic fundamentalism observed by his Christian Zimbabwean hosts. Officials said the Iranians wanted all women, including a cabinet minister, confined to the table furthest away from the head table.

Most U.S. Catholics disagree with Rome

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — Most American Catholics disagree with official church doctrine, according to a CBS News/New York Times poll. However, by a 6-1 majority, U.S. Catholics feel they can disagree with official church positions and still be "good Catholics."

According to the poll, 52 percent of American Catholics favor women priests; 63 percent favor married priests; 68 percent approve of artificial birth control; and 73 percent would permit remarriage for divorced Catholics — all positions contrary to official church policy.

Despite disagreements with Rome on policy matters, only two percent of those polled indicated an unfavorable opinion of Pope John Paul II.

Ding denounces broadcasts

HONG KONG (EP) — According to the Lutheran World Federation News Service, evangelical Christian radio programs planned for China have been denied approval by Ding Guangxun, Chairperson of the China Christian Council.

Sigurd Aske, representing Kairos Communications Service, a Lutheran body, had proposed programs that would only preach the gospel and would have nothing political in them.

Ding reportedly responded by denying approval for the broadcasts, saying that if Kairos wanted to support the Chinese churches they could send the texts of the programs to be used in seminaries or published in Tian Feng, the magazine of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement.

Danger: rock

NEW YORK, N.Y. (EP) — More than half of the people in the United States enjoy rock music, but believe that rock and roll has a bad effect on children, according to a Media General-Associate Press poll. The telephone poll of 1,462 people age 18 to 65 showed that: 56 percent supported warning stickers on records; 55 percent encouraged a ratings system for records similar to the movie rating system; and 51 percent believe rock lyrics harm children. Only one percent of those polled thought rock lyrics had a good effect on children; 38 percent felt they didn't make any difference.

Sachs gift

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (BP) — Palm Beach Atlantic College has received a \$1 million gift from Rose Sachs of Palm Beach, Fla., in memory of her late husband, Mortimer Sachs, announced Hugh R. Mathis, director of development at the college. The funds will be used to help build an administration complex for the school, located in downtown West Palm Beach, Fla., Mathis said.

Seminarians increase in Portugal

LISBON, Portugal — A record 30 students have registered for classes at the Portuguese Baptist Seminary. Included are students from three former territories governed by Portugal: Mozambique, Angola and Guinea-Bissau. This year, the seminary has opened an extension in the city of Oporto in northern Portugal and 10 people are enrolled in the initial class there.

Church touches 25 nationalities

MADRID, Spain — Preaching in English at the Immanuel Baptist Church in Madrid, but there are no cultural boundaries in its baptismal waters. Baptized in a recent service were eight Filipinos, including a husband and wife and their four sons; two Nigerians; one American; and one French woman who lives in Spain. The church, founded in 1961, has counted 25 nationalities among those to whom it has ministered during the past year.

Filipinos celebrate in Singapore

SINGAPORE — Filipino Baptists in Singapore who began meeting together for a Bible study three years ago celebrated their second anniversary as an official congregation in September. The church began in 1982 when two Filipinos attending Queenstown Baptist Church in Singapore began witnessing to friends from their homeland. Queenstown, whose members are mostly Chinese, supported the new group as an outreach congregation of its ministry. One hundred fifteen people were present for the anniversary.

German Baptists fill two posts

HAMBURG, West Germany — Two key posts in the Baptist Union of the Federal Republic of Germany have been filled. Gerd Rudzio, a pastor in Marburg, has been selected by the union's executive committee as general secretary. He replaces Siegfried Kerstan, who had held the position since 1976 but resigned due to complications following a heart attack last year. Wolfgang Lorenz, a pastor in West Berlin, has been named to a two-year term as interim president of the Baptist Theological Seminary in Hamburg.

Study shows religion is 'in' in Western Europe

STUTTGART, W. Germany (EP) — Religion plays an important role in Western Europe: two-thirds of all Western Europeans regard themselves as "religious." Most of them pray or meditate occasionally. These are some of the findings of one of the largest empirical surveys ever conducted in Europe.

More than 12,000 citizens of nine countries — Belgium, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and West Germany — were interviewed. The study was commissioned by a Dutch foundation (the European Group for the Study of Value-systems) and published by Readers' Digest in Stuttgart.

Farmers were the most religious professional group, followed by top-level managers, and unskilled workers. Skilled workers are among the least religious. Even among those describing themselves as "unreligious," 23 percent believe in God and 27 percent in a "spiritual power."

Staff Changes

North Greenwood Church, Greenwood, has called Bert Breland as pastor. Breland will be resigning as pastor of Highland Park Church, Louisville, Ky., where he has served for five years, and moving with his wife and three children to Mississippi.

Mike Benefield is the new minister of education at First Church, Pontotoc. He and his family are moving to Pontotoc from New Orleans.

Patricia Masterson, wife of the pastor at Gulfport Heights Church, is the new full-time secretary at New Hope Church, Gulf Coast.

Mark E. Gibson, minister of music and youth of First Church, Lexington, has resigned to accept a similar position at First Church, El Dorado Springs, Mo. Michael O'Brien is pastor of First Church, Lexington.

Pleasant Valley Church (Simpson) has called Jimmy T. Smith, Jr., as its pastor. Smith and his wife, Tibethia, have two children, Alicia and Tabitha. They moved to Pleasant Valley from Souls Valley Church in Lawrence.

Brian Pannell is the new minister of music and youth at First Church, Stonewall. He and his wife, Teresa, are from Gulfport.

Marlers retire after 30 years

Mr. and Mrs. L. Parkes Marler, missionaries since 1955, retired from active missionary service Feb. 1. They served in Seoul, Korea, until 1968 where he was a general evangelist and he was a church and home worker. They transferred to Guam in 1968, and he served as an English-language pastor in Agana, Guam.

In 1982, they transferred to Greece, where he served as an English-language pastor in Athens, Greece, and she as a church and home worker. Both are natives of Harpersville, Miss. She is the former Martha Ellen Townsend. They may be addressed at 712 Wilson St., Forest, Miss. 39074.

Handsboro Church, Gulfport has called Truman Herring as pastor. Herring goes from West Laurel Church, Laurel, where he served as minister of evangelism. He also served as mission pastor in the state of Washington and pastored the Mt. Hood Baptist Church in Oregon. Herring has published 18 gospel songs and a book on evangelism. He and his wife, Connie, and their three children will be residing in College Park.

James D. Brown, pastor of Cumberland Church, Webster Co., has been named pastor of Ethel Church, Ethel. Brown, a native of Calhoun County, succeeds Reed Dicken who retired last May after serving seven years as pastor. Jerry Barrett has been serving in an interim capacity.

Georgia pastor sentenced for stealing from church

MACON, Ga. (BP) — A former Southern Baptist pastor and Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee member has been sentenced to six years in prison for stealing from his church.

During his trial last November, C. Michael Blizzard entered guilty pleas to five counts of theft from Tabernacle Baptist Church, one of the largest churches in Macon, Ga.

In exchange for the guilty pleas, prosecutors agreed to drop 40 other counts against Blizzard, who resigned as pastor of Tabernacle in January 1985 and served on the SBC Executive Committee from 1979-83. Although eligible for a second four-year term on the Executive Committee, Blizzard declined to serve.

Assistant Bibb County District Attorney Sharon Ratley said Judge Hal Bell imposed a 15-year sentence on Blizzard Jan. 27. The sentence includes the provision the former pastor

will be required to serve a six-year prison term, followed by nine years' probation.

Blizzard will be eligible for parole after serving only a few months in the penitentiary, Ratley added.

Blizzard was accused of stealing more than \$58,000—including \$522 donated by a church member to buy Christmas turkeys for the poor—from the church during 1983-84.

Off the Record

Ann, a five-year-old had just spent a week on a dude ranch with her parents. Asked about it, she said excitedly, "I even saw a man who makes horses."

"Are you sure?"
"Yes," Ann replied. "He had a horse nearly finished when I saw him, and he was just nailing his feet on."

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Just for the Record



Pleasant Hill Church, Northwest Association, held a ground breaking service, Feb. 2. Lewis Ferrell, pastor, has served this church since 1979.

The new building will be a 3,500 sq. ft. educational building, with eight class rooms, fellowship hall, kitchen, two baths and a storage room. The building will cost \$126,000—and will be paid in full at the completion of the work! The church has been putting funds in a building fund for several years and now has the full amount for the new building; according to Ervin Brown, director of missions.

Pictured, front row, left to right, are Lewis D. Ferrell, pastor, Byron Kisner, chairman of new building committee, Martha Ross, Edward Williams, Lewis Hardy, and Rod Lingle, new building committee members. Second row, Ken Tucker, Larry Newsom, B. J. Sneed and Jerry Alsobrook, deacons. Not shown are new building committee members, Ron Barkley, Floyd Delaney and Jessie Robinson.



Lamar Baptist association GAs and leaders, 77 strong, traveled from associational churches to visit the Seaman's Center in Pascagoula. They were greeted by Bob Storie, who shared with them his work and the work of Jackson County churches with the seamen from around the world. Bob Storie told Mrs. Ann Backus, associational GA director, that this group was the largest ever to visit the center. Many boxes of items were taken to help in this special and needed ministry.



First Church, Hazlehurst, recently held a recognition service for GAs. The theme was A Rainbow and "My Promise to God."

Pictured (left to right), front row, are Cecilia King, Elizabeth Tullos, Emily Gibson, and Tara Ashley. Second row, Stephanie Martin, Tiffany Walker, Heather Baker, Katherine Bryant and Courtney Givens. Third row, Jennifer Johnson, Erin Patten, Rebecca Floyd, Jennifer Thompson, and Leah McElveen.



Gaston Church, Booneville recently observed Baptist Men's Day. Pictured are the speakers, left to right, top, Phil Worley, Don Eubank, Stan Howell and Neal Thompson.

Winners from the cake bake contest were (left to right), bottom, third place, Gary McCoy; second place, Charles Calvert; and first place, Robert Hughes.

Corinth Church, Heidelberg, held its annual youth Valentine Sweetheart Banquet, Feb. 14. Latricia Parker, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Joe Parker, was chosen as best dressed girl. Chris Johnson, son of Mrs. Frances Johnson, was chosen as best dressed boy. Michele Myrick, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Billy Myrick, and Gary Wayne Myrick, son of Mr. and Mrs. George H. Myrick, were chosen as the best dressed couple. Edd Holloman is pastor.

Thirteen senior adult leaders from Mississippi participated in January in a Senior Adult Special Consultant's Workshop and Leadership Lab at Ridgecrest Conference Center, according to Horace L. Kerr, supervisor of the Sunday School Board's Senior Adult Section.

Those attending were Tom Mercier and Tom Myers, Prentiss; Mr. and Mrs. Arland Eyl, Jackson; Mr. and Mrs. Ken Forbus, Greenville; Billy Johnson, Hattiesburg; Mr. and Mrs. Jim Keyser, Calhoun City; Raymon Leake, Picayune; Mr. and Mrs. W. Levon Moore, Kosciusko; and J. Barry Worrell, Collins.

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Miles

Balliet

Sunday School enrollment at Springfield Church, near Morton, has been on a steady but accelerated growth pattern during the last 1½ years. Enrollment increased 39% during that period of time, from 151 to 210, even after deaths and drops were calculated over the 16 months, according to Alan E. Balliet, pastor.

During the spring of 1985, the church held an Enrollment-Enlargement Campaign in which 30 new members were added to the Sunday School. Other than that time of special emphasis the growth has been regular, month by month. Sunday School enrollment at Springfield has been based upon attending the organization, rather than enrolling in the home or community. Jerry Miles is Sunday School director.

Daniel Memorial Church, 3784 Terry Road, Jackson will present "America, You're Too Young to Die" on March 2, at 6 p.m. This presentation, that has appeared before 2.3 million people from coast-to-coast is designed to educate, organize, and mobilize the sleeping giant of moral Americans and to turn America back to the God of her forefathers. This is the first visual presentation shown within the state of Mississippi.

The "America, You're Too Young to Die" program, presented by the Life Action Singers, is a three-screen, 13-projector, multi-media production synchronized to the lyrics of music and narration. Byron Malone is pastor.

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Sunday School assesses needs for continuing growth trend

By Frank Wm. White

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Now that Southern Baptists have ended an enrollment emphasis which led to the highest Sunday School enrollment ever, it's time to evaluate Sunday School materials and seek new ways to reach people, according to Harry Piland, director of the Sunday School Department at the Baptist Sunday School Board.

With an enrollment of 7.9 million, Southern Baptists are riding the wave of a six-year increase with four years of record high enrollments. That has paved the way for continued growth, but enrollment will need to increase more rapidly to reach Piland's goal of 10 million by 1990, Piland said.

A Bible study plan for non-Christians will be introduced in October as a new approach to outreach that will help increase enrollment, Piland said.

Sunday School literature has constantly changed since the first publication of "Kind Words" more than 100 years ago. Those changes are necessary to keep pace with trends and methodology, Piland points out.

A formal review of the distinctives of Sunday School, Church Training, Music, and missions literature was completed in 1984. "With this study in hand, we feel now is a good time to take a look at our Sunday School literature and see if changes are needed to better meet the needs of churches," Piland explained. "We will be looking at Bible content, teaching

methods, and literature format in an effort to provide Sunday School periodicals which meet the needs of our Southern Baptist churches," he said.

Piland said meeting the needs of churches ranging in size from as few as ten members to 10,000 or more in a difficult task.

Changes developed from this study will not be apparent in the literature until about 1990. No matter what changes are made, Southern Baptists will continue to have the same basic text for Sunday School, Piland said, adding: "The Bible is our textbook and everything else is resource materials."

In addition to the curriculum study, an immediate examination of the literature editing and production processes was prompted by concern about errors in a July 1985 Sunday School lesson. "There are lessons to be learned from that experience," Piland said. "We learned that we must always be very close to our people. We can always communicate more effectively."

Included in the 1985-90 Bold Mission Thrust goals is a plan to develop evangelistic Bible studies at a time other than the traditional Sunday morning hour. Outreach Bible Study is an effort to reach unsaved persons through Bible study groups in homes and other places away from the church where non-Christians might be more comfortable.

"Invitation to Life," to be available in October, is an eight-lesson Bible study prepared especially for the Outreach Bible Study project.

The complex society of today makes Sunday School growth more difficult than it might have been in the 1950s when Southern Baptist Sunday schools experienced rapid growth with a campaign called "A Million More in '54," according to Piland.

"The church no longer is the focal point of community life. As we work in new areas and with different ethnic backgrounds, we are moving away from the church tradition. That makes outreach, discipleship and new methods important in reaching people for Christ," he said.

Reaching people will be a strong emphasis of Challenge 10/90, the goal for a Sunday School enrollment of 10 million people by 1990. "It's 10 million people. We will be centering on people," Piland explained.

Frank Wm. White writes for the Sunday School Board.

Thursday, February 27, 1986

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 15

Book Reviews

THROUGH MANY WINDOWS by Arthur Gordon (Fleming H. Revell, \$10.95, 191 pp.) In this book, a master storyteller invites the reader to stand beside him and view the world through the imaginary windows of an enchanted tower, as he tells stories about the drama and splendor of living.

Some of the stories he shares are the anguish of a young doctor whose skill cannot save the girl he loves; the terror of a fisherman caught in a deadly struggle with a giant manta ray; and the self-importance of a big city pastor whose wife takes him back at Christmastime to his first little pastorate, so that he can readjust his perspective.

The author ties these emotional stories together with autobiographical sketches. A freelance writer now, he is a former editorial director for Guideposts, and has been published in many major magazines, including Reader's Digest.

His characters spring instantly to life, and his readers cannot help but feel with them their intensity of emotion. This is a book that can't be put down. — AWM

MARY SLESSOR OF CALABAR by W. P. Livingstone, \$7.95, 364 pp., paper. This biography, first published in the early 1900's, was reprinted as one of a Clarion Classic series. Mary Slessor's story is a dramatic one, for she was an uncommon woman. To piece together her story, the author drew from her personal letters. Many have pictured her "as a Victorian lady dressed in high-necked, ankle-length, flowing dresses, pompously escorted through the African rain forests in a canoe by painted tribal warriors." But this book shows her as "a courageous and free-spirited woman—eccentric and unconventional by nineteenth-century standards—but with uncompromising zeal and determination." Her qualities included humor and seriousness, roughness and tenderness, vision and practicality, a cool nerve, and an almost complete disregard for personal comfort and well-being. Mary Slessor as a missionary reached out to Africa with love. At the time of her death in 1915, the sphere of her influence covered over 2,000 miles.—AWM

Postal service forecasts rate increase in March

By Kathy Palen

WASHINGTON (BP)—The U.S. Postal Service Board of governors has announced a probable rate increase for non-profit mailers—including state Baptist newspapers and some church newsletters—although it has delayed a final decision until March 4.

Following a Feb. 4 board meeting, the governors issued a statement noting "it is prudent to tell the public now" about the expected rate increase. If approved during the March board meeting, the increase will take effect March 9.

The governors pointed to a reduction in postal subsidy appropriations approved by Congress and signed by President Reagan as the major reason for the second increase.

During December, the board of governors approved a rate increase that took effect Jan. 1. That increase, however, was based on the governors' assumption that the Postal Service would receive \$820 million in federal funds to subsidize non-profit mailing rates during 1986, said Bob Hoobing, a Postal Service spokesman.

Following the board's December decision, President Reagan vetoed the bill that contained the \$820 million figure and instead signed a substitute measure that contained only \$748 million. That final figure fell \$233 million short of what the Postal Service said it needed to maintain the

1985 level of subsidized rates.

Another factor in the overall postal rate picture is the anticipated implementation of a new budget-balancing act—the "Gramm-Rudman-Hollings plan"—recently approved by Congress, said Hoobing. Should that measure take effect as expected this spring, the predicted rate increase for non-profit, second-class mail would be about seven percent. Without the budget-balancing measure, the increase would be about four percent.

The Jan. 1 rate increase prematurely moved non-profit mailers from step 14 to step 16 of a 16-step plan begun in 1970 to phase out the postal subsidy. The additional increase would move non-profit mailers beyond step 16 and would require issuance of new rate charts.

For many families one is not enough

Approximately 63% of U.S. families now own two or more automobiles, compared to 46% four years ago. And half of the country's families now own two or more color TVs, compared to 23% in 1981.

Furthermore, 13% own two or more homes. The figure in 1981 was 8%.

—USA TODAY

SCRAPBOOK

Ingredients

Ingredients to bake a cake are flour and eggs and such,
A little soda, bit of salt, some shortening, not too much.
A hopeless mess there soon appears that's poured into the pan,
But rightly mixed and baked just so, a finished cake will stand.

Ingredients to make me whole, completed, strong and straight;
A blend of joy and sorrow, pain, love, and faith to wait.
A hopeless mess seems to appear poured out by life on me,
But mixed and timed by His own hand, God's person will I be.

—Mrs. D. F. Crowe
Greenville

Failing Forward

The entire length of the brook that flows through our acreage is strewn with obstacles to the stream's peace. Big rocks and little rapids make the brook falter, hesitate, stumble, and sprawl. The smooth flow of the stream is thwarted by decaying logs and baffled by fallen limbs. The brook is plagued by fretful frustrations and failures, suffering from back eddies and contrary cross currents, its flow interrupted by rock-strewn waterfalls.

But the stream has its main direction. It is moving toward its destination, and it will stand for no nonsense from back eddies, cross currents, and cataracts. They can exist but they cannot control. They can get in the way, but they cannot stay in the way. They can raise a ripple or a protecting wave, but they cannot succeed in rebellion against the brook's determined course.

Along the way a stream is certain to be encumbered, interrupted, delayed, and it will suffer momentary failures. But even when a stream fails, it fails forward. Even when the water falls, it falls toward its goal. — Harold E. Kohn

Trinity

Spirit of love
Spirit of kindness
Oh holy, holy
Holy Divineness.

Saviour of man
Thy precious blood spilled
Oh Jesus, Jesus
Thou wounds have healed.

God Almighty
Creator of all
Oh bestow of thy mercy
Lest I should fall.

—Stephen Bonner Williams

The tithe

The tithe is only ten percent
Of all that we receive
No matter if it's a million
Or less than you can believe.
Sometimes we might neglect
To set aside the tithe
Thinking of using it ourselves
For betterment of life.
If you wonder about the tithe
How much that you should give
Just think, if God got the nine
tenths

And to you one tenth did give
You would figure really quick
How much one tenth would be
It would be easy to figure out
One tenth would be yours, you see.
So let us gladly pay God's tithe
And be joyous; too, my friend,
For one day God might turn it
around
And give us only one tenth to
spend!

—Winnie Franklin
Oxford

Alone but not lonely

For a few days recently I was snowed in at home — alone. I was alone but not lonely.

Some of my most cherished books were re-read. What faithful companions, what proven friends they are!

The best of music stirred and enriched my soul. How fortunate are we who can hear and appreciate great music.

Treasured paintings that have hung on the walls for years suddenly revealed new facets of beauty and inspiration as I took time to study and see them anew. Gradually I became grateful for each log which I somewhat reluctantly and almost reverently placed on the hearth. The fireplace became more than the focus of my attention — it had taken on spiritual qualities. It had become an altar.

Gratitude became an unceasing prayer. Stark, barren trees were transformed into majestic, living statues.

What joy, what blessings await us in hours of solitude, where we can be alone but not lonely. — William Arthur Ward

Baptist Record

- Life and Work: Christ is Lord
- Uniform: A hope worth living
- Bible Book: Right living during stress

Right living during stress

By Billy McKay
Background Passage:

II Timothy 3:1-17

Focal Passage: II Timothy 3:1-7, 9-17

Introduction. How do we find the secret to right living in times of stress? One of the key phrases in II Timothy is "a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2:3). A soldier of Jesus Christ must spend much time learning his enemy. If he does not know his enemy, he will lose the battle.

Since II Timothy is the believer's manual or handbook on "how to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (cf. 2:3), consider the following guidelines to right living in times of stress:

I. We must recognize the source of the times of stress (3:1-9). The word "perilous" in 3:1 means "hard," "fierce," or "stressful." Our word "callous" is from this word. We use the

word "callous" to refer to the hardness of the skin or the hardness of mind or feelings. We even use it to refer to "hard times." This same word is translated "fierce" in Matthew 8:28 where the demon-possessed man was said to be so "fierce" that no one could control him. This is an apt description of the times in which we live today. The point is that today's world is out of control. Since this is true, Paul is trying to help us as believers to know how to live in such stressful or fierce times.

Oscar Wilde once said, "We are each our own devil, and we make this world our hell." I do not agree with the theology of this statement because it denies the existence of a devil and a hell. I do agree with the application which says that men can become devil-like and this results in their creating a hell-like world. Paul is

crystal clear in not making God responsible for the stressful times, but rather men. He says that "evil men" (cf. 3:13) are the source of the stressful times. Note also the word "men" in 3:2 and 3:8. Man is not the solution to the problem; Man is the problem! Pogo once said, "We have found the enemy, and he is us!"

The time of the stressful seasons is the "last days" (3:1) which refer to the period between Jesus' first and second comings. In verses 2-5 Paul gives us an autopsy of the world of "evil men" (3:13). There are 19 descriptions of their sins. These evil men deny the gospel themselves (3:5). Their method is illustrated in 3:6 which says that they prey on a certain class of women who are intellectually weak, naive, gullible, and laden with sins. Two magicians who opposed Moses are mentioned in 3:8. Moses' message of truth prevailed in the court of Pharaoh, and so will our message of truth prevail. We must keep on

presenting true teaching and living holy lives. A word of encouragement is given in 3:9. Their message of false doctrine will not stand.

II. We must recognize our strength in the times of stress (3:10-14). Paul illustrates the source of strength by referring to himself in 3:10-11. He often refers to his own experiences in writing to his spiritual son, Timothy (e.g., I Tim. 1:11-16; 2:7; II Tim. 1:12; 2:9-10). The reason Paul could ask believers to follow his example is found in I Corinthians 11:1 where he says, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." Paul had found strength for the stressful times. In Philippians 4:13 he says, "I can do all things through Christ who keeps on pouring his power in us."

III. We must recognize the solution to the times of stress (3:15-17). Paul introduces the solution to the times of stress in 3:15 by reminding Timothy of his godly heritage. Someone asked

his friend what his favorite Bible translation was. He replied, "My mother's!" His mother and grandmother gave him a firm foundation in the Old Testament scriptures (3:15). The soldier's weapon, the word of God (cf. Eph. 6:17), is described in 3:15-17. Its source is God (3:16). Its goal is to make us "perfect" or "mature." Mature carries with it the idea of completeness or wholeness. This means that we are equipped by the word of God as the solution to the times of stress. The word of God does five things according to 3:15-17. It gives us wisdom which brings salvation. It teaches us. It reproves wrong in us. It shows us the correct path to follow, and it gives us instruction in right living. Jesus' use of the word of God in Matthew 4:1-11 illustrates the utilization of God's word in times of stress.

Billy McKay is pastor, First, Belzoni.

A hope worth living

By Gus Merritt
I Peter 1:1 to 2:10

Focal passage: I Peter 1:3-9, 13-21

The Apostle Peter wrote to believers dispersed throughout the provinces of Asia Minor. These dispersed believers had settled down alongside of unbelievers. Thus, the designation in the King James Version, "strangers" (v. 1). As such, they were under constant observation by these unbelievers. Their lives were observed constantly, therefore it was imperative that they live in a way so as to honor Christ. Primarily, these were Jewish Christians but all believers were included. This was the region evangelized by the Apostle Paul.

This letter was probably written in 64 or 65 A.D., during the reign of Nero, emperor of Rome. During that time there was persecution of Christians. The persecution was principally at

Rome but had spread to the provinces of the Roman Empire. Under those circumstances, the letter is written to give assurance and guidance for living. At a time when things are not going well for the Christian, words of consolation and assurance are most important. The believer's faith is always strongest in adversity.

The Christian's hope is adequate even in the darkness hour. The word "hope" in the New Testament has a far deeper meaning than the one usually used by the world. If you ask someone if they are going on a vacation this year, the reply may be, "I hope to." This usage carries with it a sense of uncertainty. The word "hope" in the New Testament has no uncertainty about it. Hope in the New Testament is "desire plus expectation" which means assurance (v. 3).

The word, "blessed" is the word

from which we get the word "eulogy" or "eulogize." It is only used in reference to God in the New Testament. The word is a compound word meaning to "speak well of" or "to praise." The reason for this praise is stated in verses 3-5.

(1). We are "born again" or regenerated through our faith in Christ and his resurrection. In Romans 10:9, salvation is made possible through confession of Jesus as Lord and believing that God has raised him from the dead. Without the resurrection of Jesus, there would be no eternal life. The resurrection of Jesus is the apex of the Gospel of Christ. The Apostle Paul informs us in I Corinthians 15:12-19, that our hope is based on Jesus' resurrection. Because he lives, we have the hope of eternal life. Because Christ conquered death, the Christian should fear nothing. The power over death is the power to deliver from or through any trial.

(2). We have an eternal inheritance.

We are made heirs and joint heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17). This means all that Christ has we will share with him. No wonder Peter used the word "blessed!"

(3). Assurance is given that we will share in all the blessings because of the power of God. Eternal security of the believer is one of the plainest teachings of the Bible. Salvation is not dependent upon us but God. It is his salvation (Ps. 51:12). Even the faith to believe is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8). The only part we have in salvation is committing willingly to the call to be saved. In the Old Testament, eternal security has a strong proof text. Ecclesiastes 3:14 declares, "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him."

Through eternal security of the believer, God is saying, "Do not worry over your commitment to Me. I will do the keeping so you will be free to serve Me without fear and doubt."

When I led one of my children across the street, I held his or her hand; not them holding my hand. I wanted them secure. God also holds us. We do not hold him.

The oft quoted saying, "Salvation is free, but it is not cheap," applies well to I Peter 1:13-21. Because we were redeemed with the most precious gift in all the universe, the blood of Jesus Christ, how we live our lives should reflect our appreciation and love to Him. Also, because God lavished upon us such love, he is taking care of his "investment" in us. Philippians 1:6, assures us that what God started in us he will bring to full completion. In I Peter 1:15, the word "holy" in reference to the Christian means "set apart." The Christian is set apart from sin to righteousness. The word "conversation" means "behavior." Our behavior as believers is to reflect the character of the Holy Spirit within.

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Christ is Lord

By Peter McLeod
Matthew 16:15-24

In an early pastorate, a well-known businessman was a member of our fellowship. He rarely attended and never contributed financially. He was a "member" in name only.

I decided to attempt a restoration operation which would get him involved in the life and ministry of the church. For months I visited him regularly at his store and, in a half-joking, half-serious way, attempted to get some positive response from him regarding his church and faith relationships. One day, in sheer desperation, I walked in and asked bluntly, "Walt, why in the world did you ever join the church?" With uncommon candor he replied, "To tell you the truth, Peter, I don't know why I joined the church!" I gave him an "A" for honesty and an "F" for commitment.

Yet Walt is typical of millions who have their names on our church rolls but have only a nominally neutral commitment. Somehow, somewhere

we have failed to communicate the significance of church membership to them.

When we talk about the church, no passage of scripture is more basic than Matt. 16:15-24. This is the first time in the recorded history of Christ that He mentions the church. It represents a watershed experience in His public ministry and in the understanding of the disciples concerning their call and purpose.

A. Who established the Church? (vs. 15-18)

Christ said, "I will build my church." Christ established the church. Some people have problems with this because they have an aversion to organizations. They are "Lone Ranger" Christians who want no organized or institutionalized involvement. Yet unorganized Christians are no match for highly organized, deeply entrenched evil. The tension between this aversion and this awareness is what give most of us fits. As the well-known jingle puts it,

"To live in love with the saints above,
Oh, that will be glory.
But to live below with some saints I know,
Well, that's another story!"

Most of us, from time to time, have the urge to sever all ties with the organized church. We think of the freedom it would bring — no more meetings, no more committees, no more minutes, no more stewardship campaigns and so on. We fight organization at every turn; and yet, at the same time, we are forced to concede its inevitability.

Jesus said, "I will build my church and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it." He was not talking about an illusive "Don Quixote" fighting imaginary windmills but of the unified body of the church, under His leadership, breaking down the walls that damn and divide humanity.

B. Why Was the Church Established? (vs. 18-24)

In my early Christian experience, a favorite song was "Hold the Fort!" The word picture in the hymn is one of Christians in a defensive posture behind the walls of the "gospel fort"

just holding on until Jesus returns to rescue us from the powers of evil. The tune may be "foot-stompin'" but the theology is totally out of harmony with what Jesus is teaching here.

The stance He portrays is one of offense not defense. It is the gates of hell which are being stormed, not the gates of the church. The church is to be on the offensive, battering down the gates of hell and penetrating every darkened corner of our world with the light and life of the gospel.

Why was the church established? To be the instrument of Christ in His strategy of penetrating the world with his redemptive life. In Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus said that his followers were to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world." The purpose of salt is to penetrate meat, and the purpose of light is to penetrate darkness. Penetration is our purpose so that we might illumine man's darkness in his worlds of business, politics, health, education, etc., and in so doing, we might bring him to a saving knowledge of Christ as Lord.

Christianity was never intended to remove us from life, but to place us at its very heart so that mankind might

hear the "good news of God." They can never claim him as Lord until we light the way. Their response, therefore, is our responsibility.

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